

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



**Draft 2010 Outstandingly Remarkable Values
Report for the Merced Wild and Scenic River**



Cover:
Merced Lake. *Merced River
Wilderness Above Nevada Fall
Segment.* NPS Photo.

Draft 2010 Outstandingly Remarkable Values Report for the Merced Wild and Scenic River

Report to the public, June 2010
Yosemite National Park, CA
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Introduction

A critical first step in planning for wild and scenic rivers is defining what the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act calls the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs). This Draft 2010 Outstandingly Remarkable Values Report for the Merced Wild and Scenic River represents the collective knowledge gained from public comment, scientific information, subject-matter expertise, management input, and expert guidance from other wild and scenic river professionals. These values will serve as the foundation of the Merced River Plan and will guide the future management of the river. This draft report is available for review and comment through July 2010, after which time, the NPS will bring comments into the next steps of the planning process.



In 1968, Congress passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to preserve some of America's rivers in a free-flowing condition. According to the act,

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreation, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Merced River and South Fork Merced River in California were designated wild and scenic in 1987. Most of the Merced Wild and Scenic River is in Yosemite National Park (81 miles), with the remainder in U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands west of the park.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act stipulates that federal land managers must protect and enhance¹ the values that merit a river's designation as wild and scenic. There are three sets of such values: the river's free-flowing condition, its water quality, and its other outstandingly remarkable values, which are the unique characteristics that make a river worthy of special protection².

To protect and enhance these values, the act directs managers to prepare a comprehensive management plan for each wild and scenic river. The plan must address resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacity, and other management practices necessary or desirable to achieve the act's purposes. A foundational element of a comprehensive management plan is identification of the river's outstandingly remarkable values.

Left:
El Captain reflected
in the Merced River.
Yosemite Valley
Segment. NPS Photo

1. The Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (Interagency Council) defines *protect* as eliminating adverse effects, while *enhance* is defined as improving conditions.
2. "Wild and Scenic River Management Responsibilities," 2002 Interagency Council Technical Report, p. 2, available at <http://www.rivers.gov/publications/management.pdf>.



Criteria and Process

There are several criteria that guided the development of the ORVs contained in this report. Two of the most important criteria are contained in a technical paper on the river study process issued by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council¹. To be outstandingly remarkable, a value must meet two criteria:

- It must be river related or dependent. This means that a value must:
 - *Be located in the river or on its immediate shorelands (generally within ¼ mile on either side of the river);*
 - *Contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem; and/or*
 - *Owe [its] location or existence to the presence of the river.*²

AND

- It must be rare, unique, or exemplary at a comparative regional or national scale. As expressed by the Interagency Council in 1999, this means that *such a value would be one that is a conspicuous example from among a number of similar values that are themselves uncommon or extraordinary.*³

In addition to applying these two criteria in developing the draft outstandingly remarkable values for the Merced River in Yosemite National Park, the Interagency Council also suggests that agencies *clearly define* ORVs. Through this exercise, agencies are able to identify ORV baseline conditions, a process that in turn helps guide future ORV management. This ORV Report represents the NPS's efforts to more clearly define the components of each Merced River ORV; it also responds to public comments heard during public scoping process for the plan requesting that the NPS more clearly define the ORVs.

Another factor relevant to the ORV refinement process is a settlement agreement that the NPS entered into in September 2009. After years of litigation over earlier versions of the Merced River Plan, the settlement agreement outlined the overall process for completing a new plan. With regard to ORVs, the settlement agreement provides that:

- *The NPS shall define ORVs in accordance with all legal requirements and guidance, including but not limited to the language contained in the 1982 Secretarial Guidelines and the reports of the Interagency Wild and Scenic River Coordinating Council;*
- *The NPS would involve several user capacity experts in defining the Merced River's outstandingly remarkable values; and*
- *The NPS will provide one or more public workshops to consult with individual experts and representatives from academic institutions, tribal governments and local, state and federal government agencies on protecting and enhancing ORVs. Through these public workshops, NPS will gather information and advice relevant to ORVs from these experts and other individuals identified by Plaintiffs, within their individual areas of expertise.*

1. "The Wild & Scenic River Study Process," December 1999, available at <http://www.rivers.gov/publications.html>.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. Note that NPS defined "regional" to be the Sierra Nevada within California.



Outstandingly Remarkable Values

The NPS began the process of reevaluating the Merced’s ORVs in winter 2010.¹ Using the criteria identified above, the NPS reviewed the ORVs that were developed for the Merced in its previous river plans (2000 and 2005), along with the draft ORVs prepared in 2008. During the review process, the NPS also consulted a wide array of baseline data and monitoring information related to conditions of resources within the river corridor.

Beginning in January 2010, the agency conducted the following ORV internal workshops to develop the Merced’s ORVs:

Date January 2010
Participants Merced River Plan steering team and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act specialists
Outcome Produced first new set of draft Merced ORVs

Date February 2010
Participants Yosemite National Park natural and cultural resource experts
Outcome Reviewed and refined of draft Merced ORVs

Date February 2010
Participants Consultation with Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council and NPS staff
Outcome Critically reviewed ORV criteria and draft Merced ORVs

Date February 2010
Participants Merced River Plan core team, environmental compliance contractors, and user capacity experts
Outcome Reviewed and refined draft Merced ORVs and reviewed public input from MRP scoping regarding ORVs

Date March 2010
Participants Yosemite National Park natural and cultural resource experts
Outcome Critically reviewed and refined draft Merced ORVs

Date April 2010
Participants Yosemite Management Team review
Outcome Provided approval of draft ORVs and determined appropriate way to solicit public input

Date June-July 2010
Participants Public, academic, and professional organization review, and local, state, and federal agency review
Outcome Critically review and refine draft Merced River ORVs, provide specific locations of ORVs, and discuss condition of them.

1. Congress establishes the ORVs for a river upon its designation. In the case of the Merced, the NPS first considered its ORVs in 1982 as part of the Nationwide River Inventory. In 1986, the U.S. Forest Service determined the river’s eligibility and suitability for designation by establishing ORVs as part of the *Sierra National Forest Draft Land and Resource Management Plan*. The NPS further defined the ORVs in the 1996 NPS Housing Plan and the 2000 Merced River Plan.
 2. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) - Public Law 90-542, and amendments thereto.



Segments and Classifications

According to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 3(b):

The agency charged with the administration of each component of the national wild and scenic rivers system [...] shall [...] establish detailed boundaries therefore (which boundaries shall include an average of not more than 320 acres of land per mile measured from the ordinary high water mark on both sides of the river); and determine which of the classes [...] best fit the river or its various segments.

Yosemite National Park has established a quarter (1/4) mile boundary measured from the ordinary high water mark on both sides of the river for the 81 miles the agency manages. Based on the level of development at the time of designation in 1987, seven (7) segments representing the management areas were established.

The classification of a river segment indicates the level of development on the shorelines, in the watershed, and the degree of accessibility by road or trail. Classifications are defined by the act as follows:

Wild:

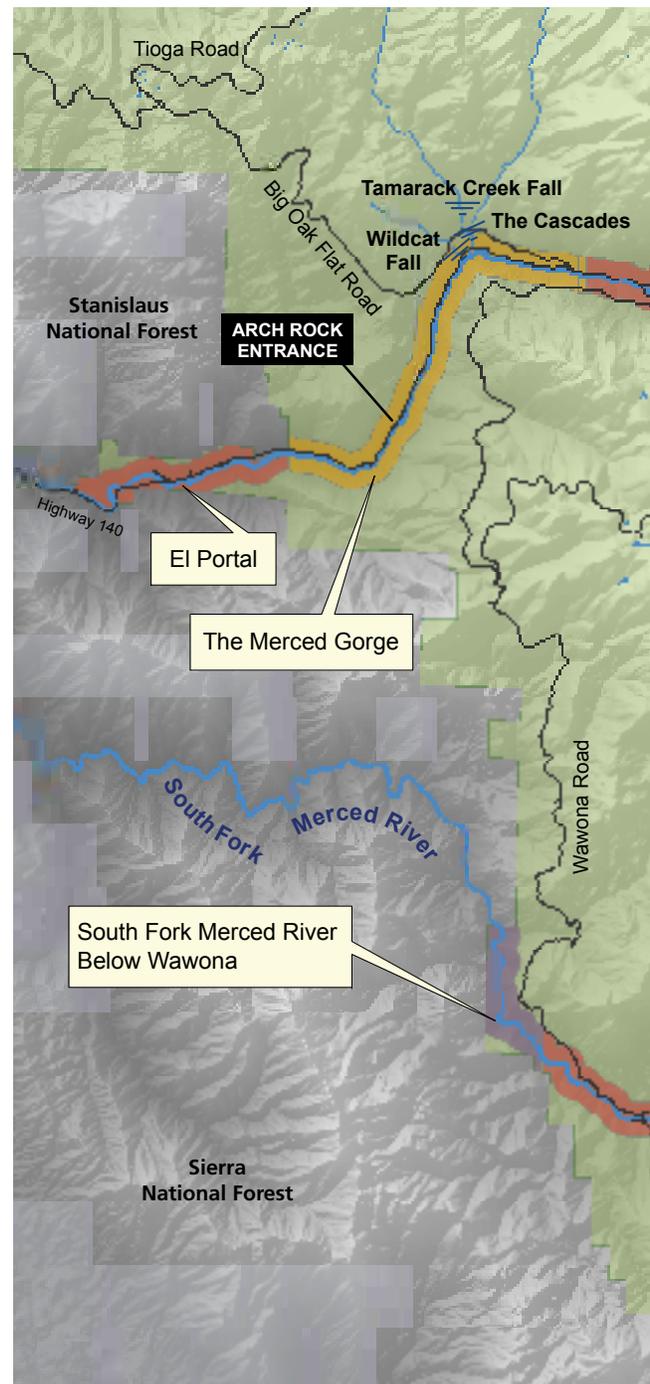
Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundment and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and water unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic:

Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

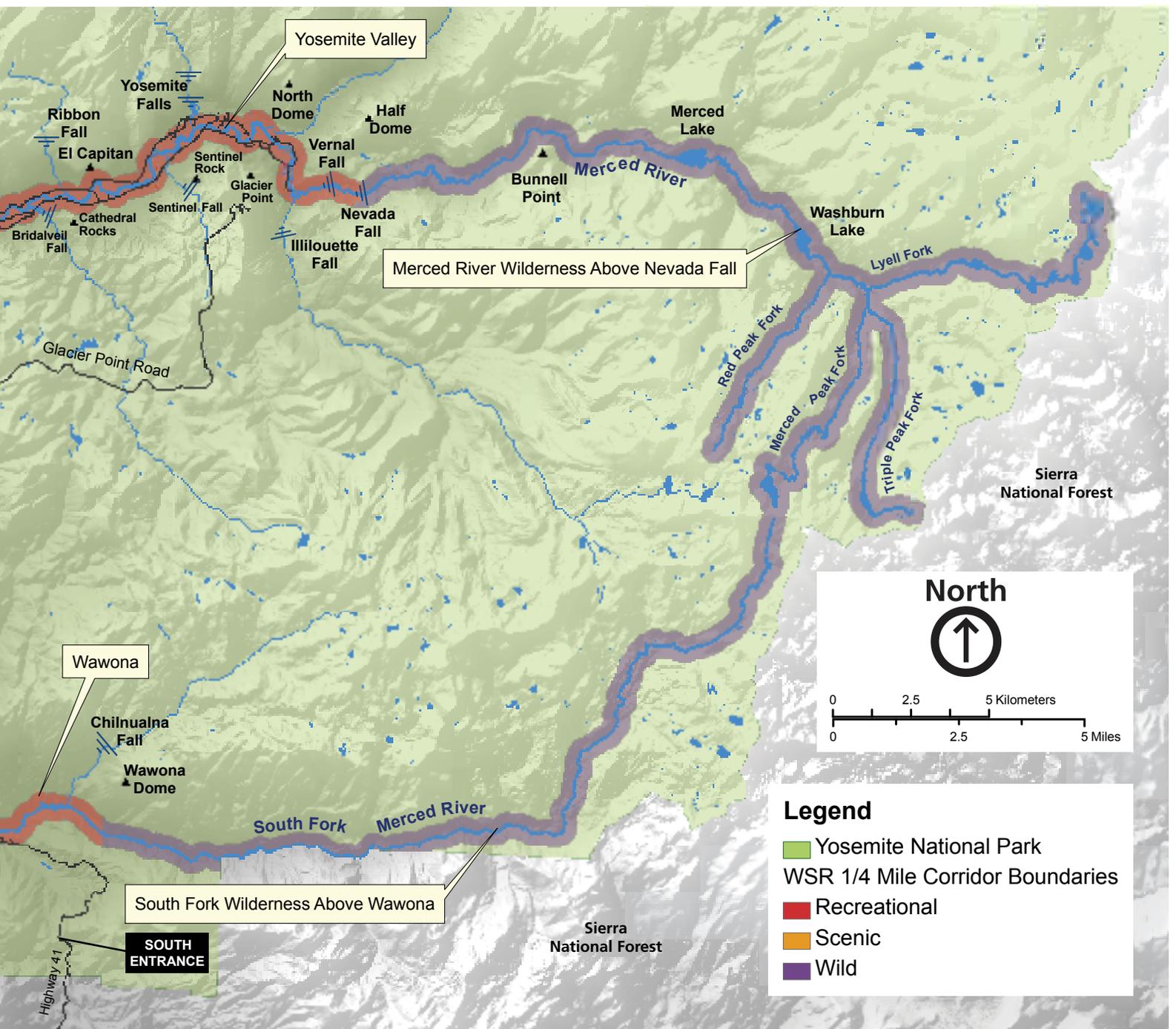
Recreational:

Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.



Note:

Although the language is similar, wild-scenic-recreational classifications should NOT be confused with scenery or recreation ORVs.



What follows are the draft ORVs for the Merced River in Yosemite National Park. These are the truly exceptional qualities that merit the Merced’s designation as a Wild and Scenic River. The Merced River Plan will use these values as a foundation for planning and management, with a fundamental focus on the protection and enhancement of these values. Pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the plan will provide “primary emphasis . . . to protecting [the river’s] aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features.”³³ It will establish the management objectives for protecting and enhancing these values, the actions needed to achieve those objectives, and the standards to be enforced to ensure that the objectives are maintained over time. Finally, the Merced River Plan will also establish management objectives for preserving the river’s free-flowing condition and water quality.

Meadow and Riparian Complexes

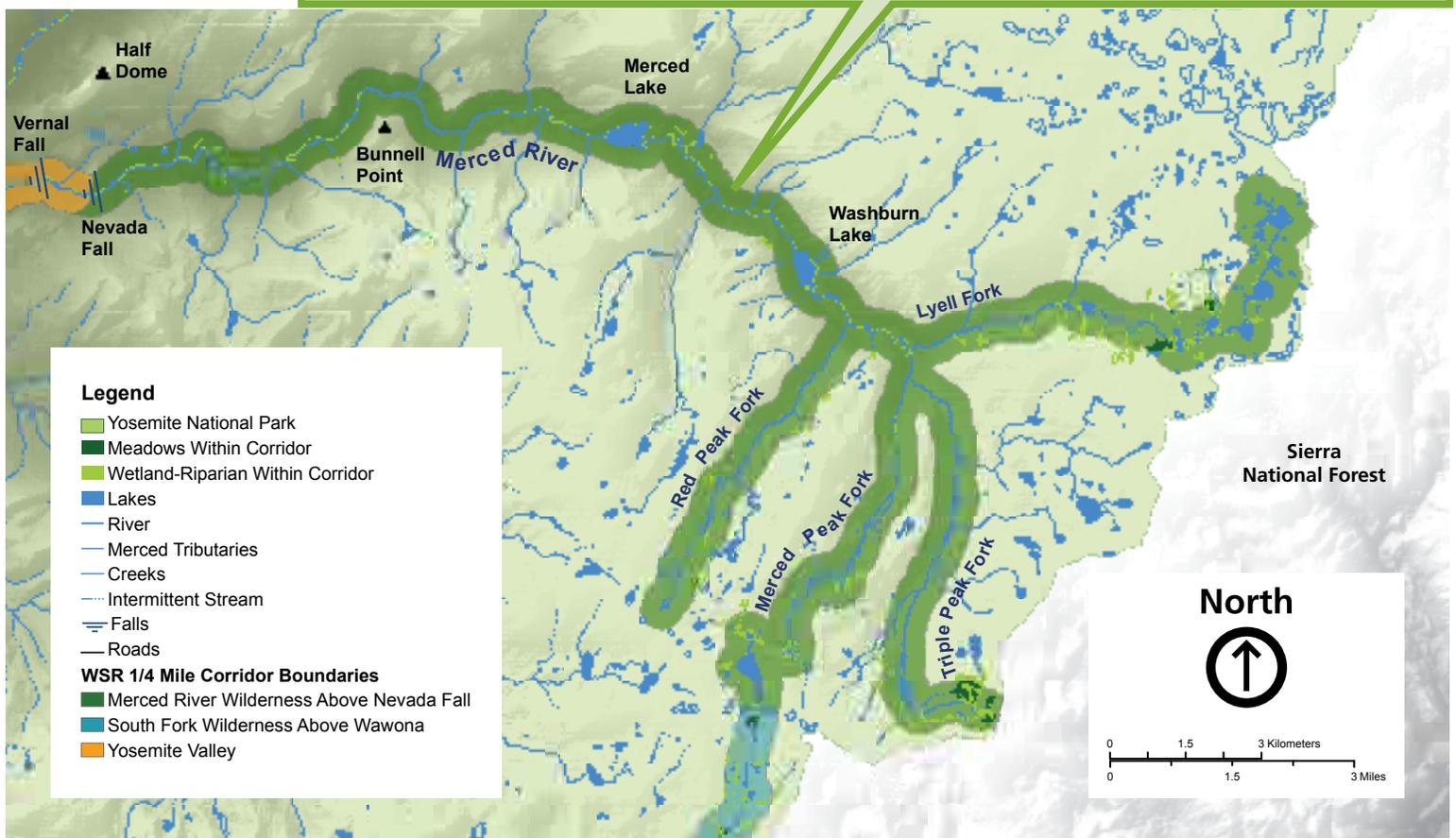
The Merced River and South Fork Merced River support a suite of riparian and meadow ecosystems within Yosemite National Park; the Yosemite Valley meadows are among the largest mid-elevation meadow complexes in the Sierra Nevada. Dependent on these habitats is a species of plant (Sierra sweet bay) and nine special status animal species (harlequin ducks, black swifts, bald eagles, osprey, willow flycatchers, yellow warbler, western pond turtles, western red bat, and Sierra Nevada mountain beaver). Sustained by periodic flooding, these habitats are river related crossroads of life in a landscape already vibrant with productive habitats.



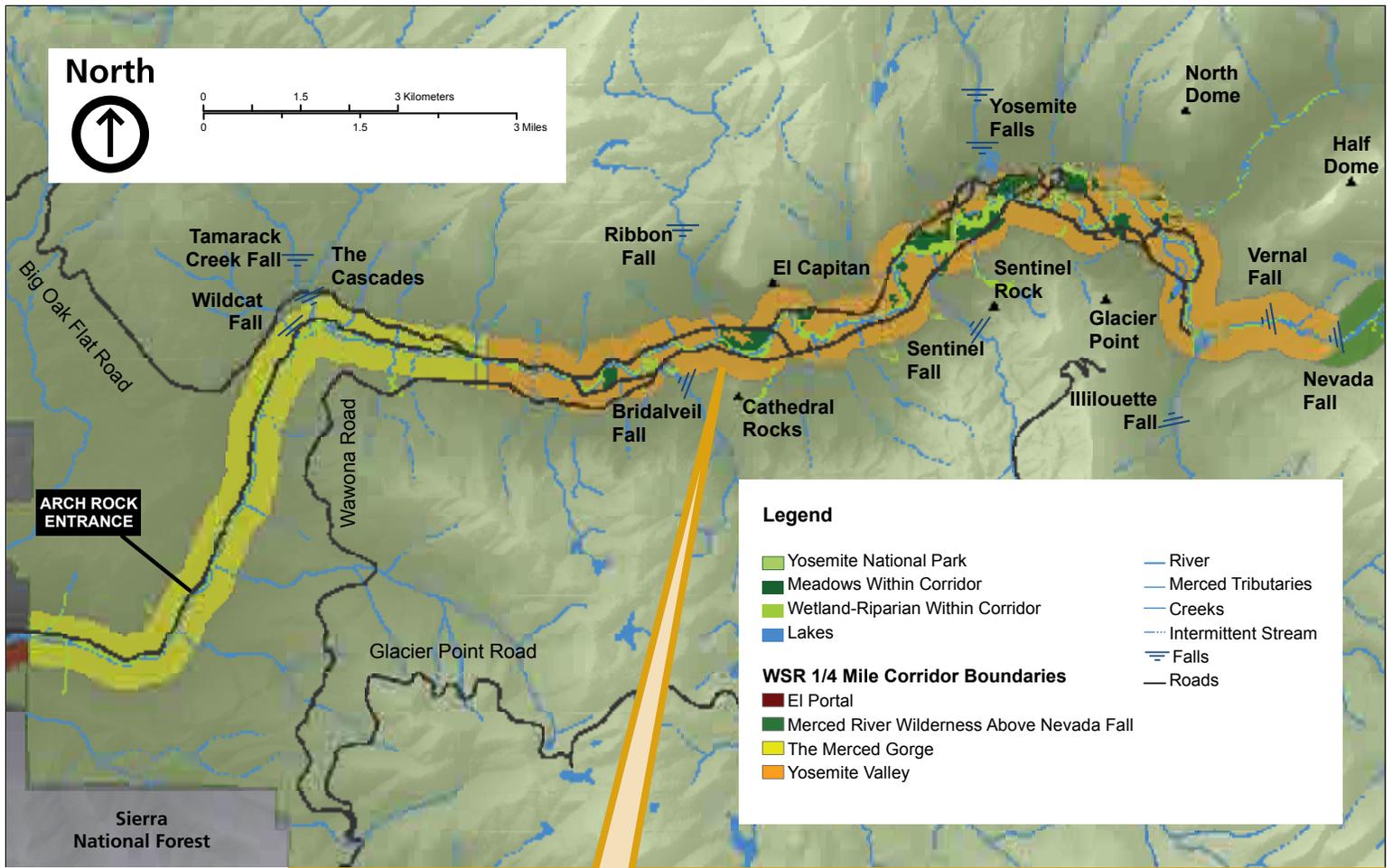
Above:
Harlequin duck. NPS Photo.

Merced River Wilderness Above Nevada Fall (WILD classification)

Numerous small meadows and adjacent riparian habitats¹ occur on this stretch of river. Owing their existence to the river and its annual flooding, these habitats and small meadows support eight of the nine special status animal species known to occur along the Merced.



1. Riparian areas are plant communities contiguous to and affected by surface and subsurface hydrologic features, with distinctly different vegetative species or more vigorous growth forms than those in adjacent areas, and are usually transitional between wetland and upland communities.



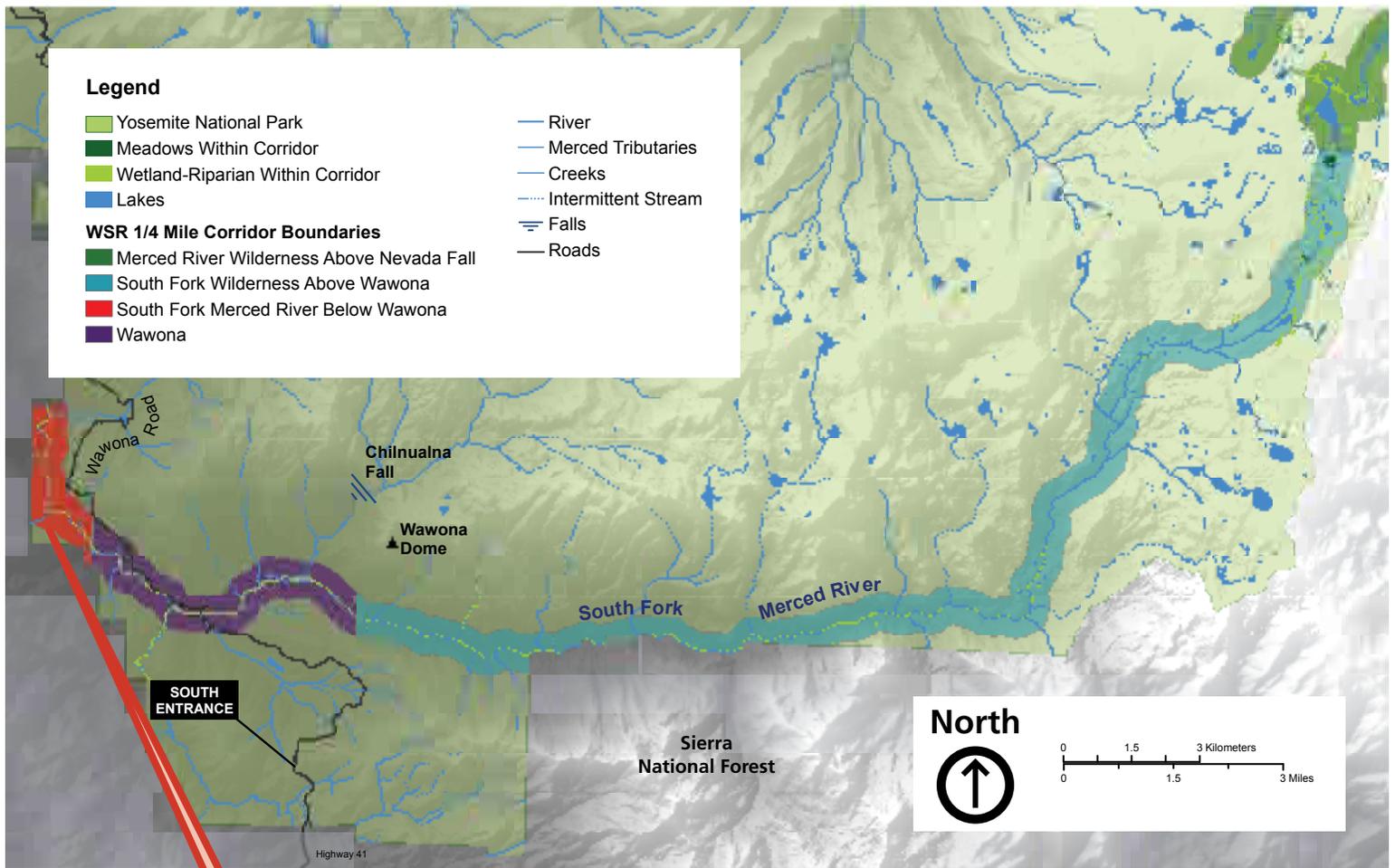
Yosemite Valley (RECREATIONAL classification)

The large, moist, mid-elevation meadows and the associated riparian vegetation communities of Yosemite Valley owe their existence to the river, the high water table the river sustains, and its annual flooding. These mid-elevation meadows, most greater than 30 acres in size, and their associated riparian habitats and wildlife species are rare and unusual at a regional and national scale.¹ The meadows sustain eight special status animal species and an exceptional diversity of bat species.² This wildlife diversity is a function of the variety of niches made possible by the meadows, the related riparian vegetation, and the river.



Above:
Sentinel Meadow. Yosemite Valley Segment. NPS Photo.

1. The majority of large Sierra Nevada meadows occur between 6,500 and 8,500 feet; 62% of all Sierra meadows are smaller than 10 acres.
2. It is the diversity of bat species that is exceptional, for the species are otherwise common



South Fork Merced River Below Wawona (WILD classification)

Below Wawona, the South Fork Merced River enters a seldom-visited wild stretch that provides habitat for a rare plant, the Sierra sweet bay (*Myrica hartwegii*). This special status shrub is known from only five Sierra Nevada counties. In Yosemite, it occurs on sand bars and banks at the water's edge of the South Fork of the Merced River downstream from Wawona and on Big Creek.

Wildlife because sometimes people go off the trail and kill the flowers and plants.

Public Scoping Correspondence #18 in response to *What do you want to see protected?*

Special status wildlife and (e.g., YLF, Willow Flycatcher) -Wildlife and plants in general.

Public Scoping Correspondence #105 in response to *What do you love?*

The natural eco systems and their proper evolutionary processes. The raw, untouched view of the wilderness, glaciation, natural erosions, and the whole experience.

Public Scoping Correspondence #22 in response to *What do you love?*



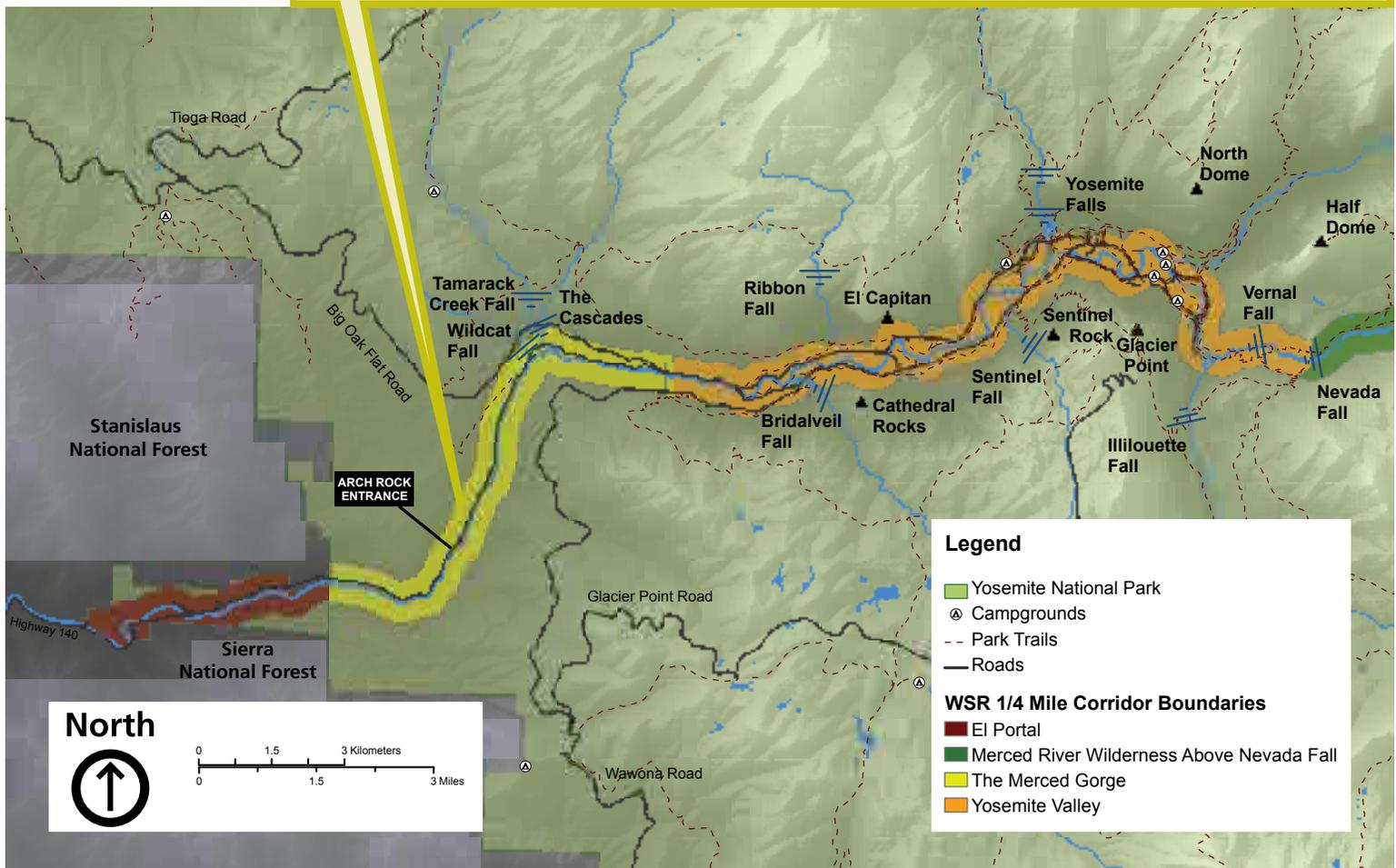
Recreation

Yosemite is a nationally and internationally renowned destination, one of America's first national parks, and a World Heritage Site. The Merced and South Fork Merced Rivers provide for exceptional outdoor river-related recreational experiences. The dramatic and picturesque setting (also described in the scenic ORV) is central to these experiences. Settings range from the undeveloped wilderness of the Upper Merced and South Fork, to Yosemite Valley with its views of high granite cliffs and towering waterfalls, to Wawona, the Merced Gorge, and El Portal, with their proximity to the roar and vibration of the river during spring runoff.

For many, the Merced and South Fork Merced provide a first connection to wild nature, inspiring awe and wonder. Others are called back year after year, building long-lasting relationships and attachments to the rivers and their environs. For all visitors, the Merced and the South Fork Merced rivers are places to experience a wild and scenic river in one of America's first and most revered national parks.

The Merced Gorge (SCENIC classification)

As it plunges some 2,000 vertical feet through the Merced Gorge, the Merced River provides a dramatic backdrop for a variety of visitor activities. This segment is undeveloped except for the adjacent road. The road's proximity to the river provides for scenic auto touring and easy access to pools, many of which are tucked away among gigantic granite boulders. These pools, beaches, and other areas are popular for activities such as swimming, fishing, and picnicking. Overall, this segment consists of a largely natural setting and provides excellent opportunities for solitude.



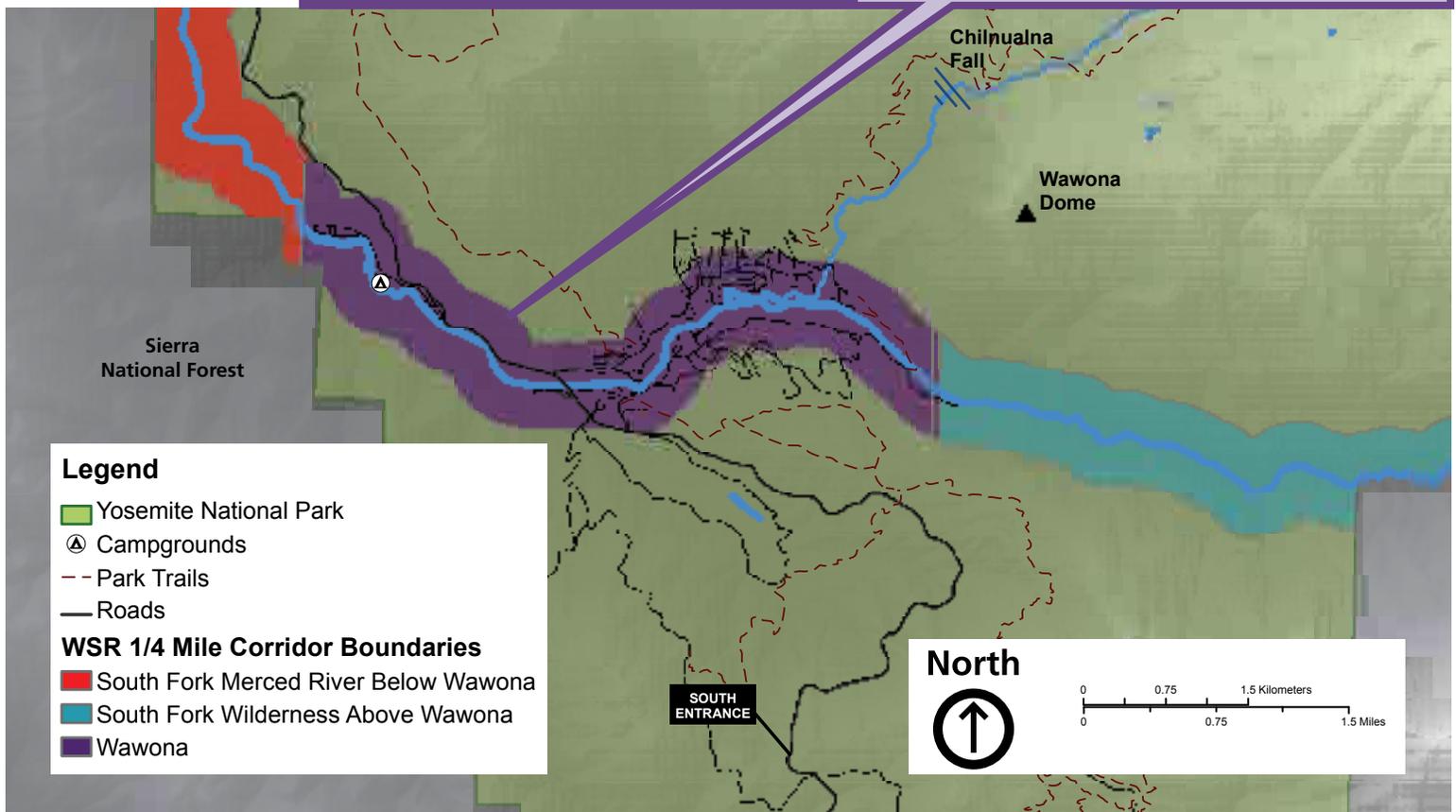


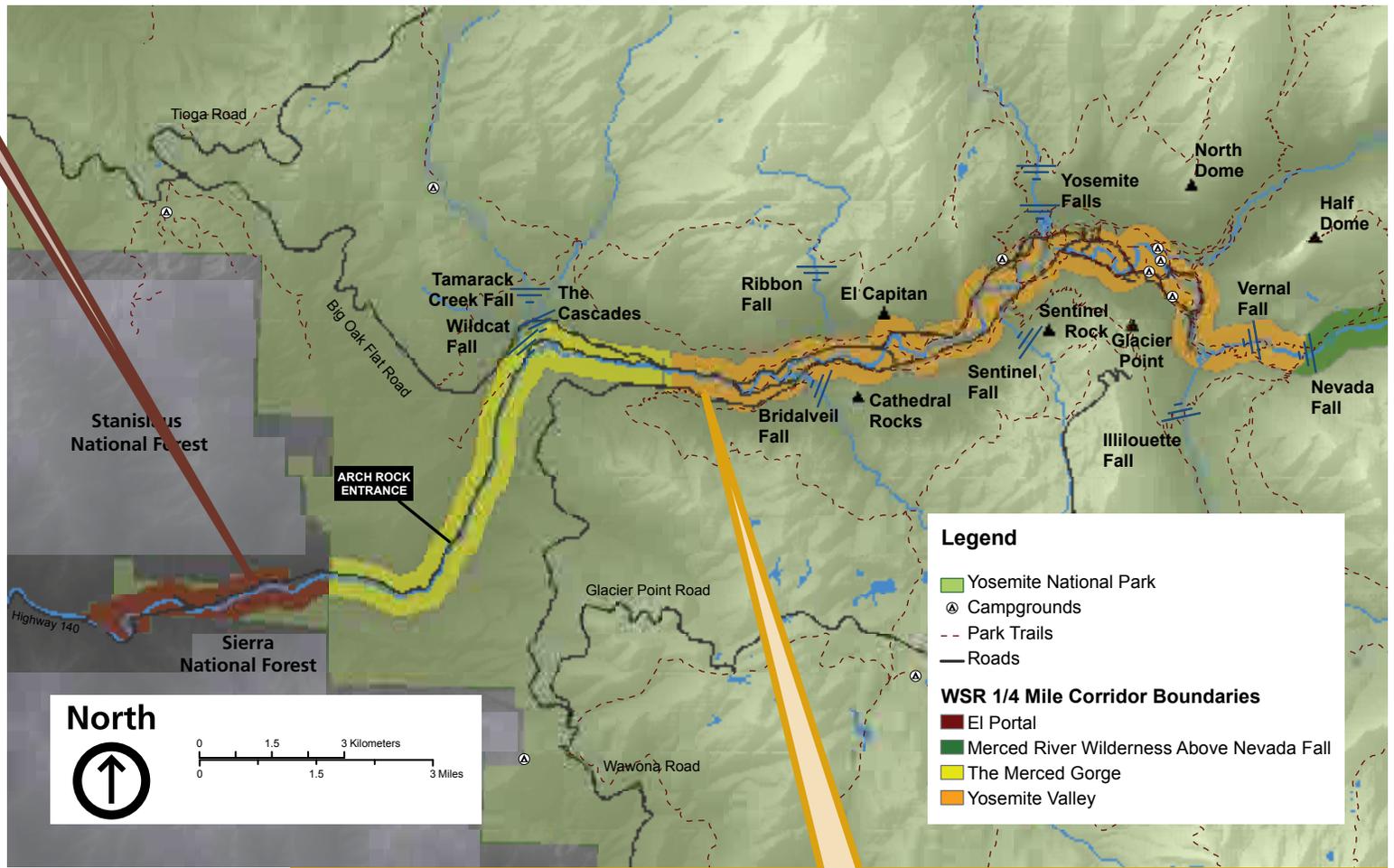
Above:
Merced River Pool. *Wawona* Segment.
NPS Photo.

El Portal and Wawona

(RECREATIONAL classification)

The Merced River through El Portal and the South Fork Merced River through Wawona provide a largely natural setting for visitors to easily connect with the river through a variety of active, creative, and contemplative river-related recreational pursuits. Readily accessible, the pools and beaches on these river stretches are visited repeatedly and contribute to strong place attachment for local residents and visitors alike. Swimming and relaxing along the river are common, providing respite from the summer heat. Similarly, fishing is popular along these segments, with various holes treasured for their combination of scenery, fishing success, and solitude. Finally, camping along the South Fork in Wawona allows visitors to be close to the river overnight.





Yosemite Valley (RECREATIONAL classification)

Drawn to Yosemite Valley's incomparable setting, people come from around the world - sometimes many times, sometimes across generations - to recreate along the Merced River. Focusing many of their activities around the Merced, a sublime foreground for El Capitan, Yosemite Falls, and Half Dome, people form strong personal associations and traditions. The scenery is unarguably iconic; the recreational experiences, moving and memorable.

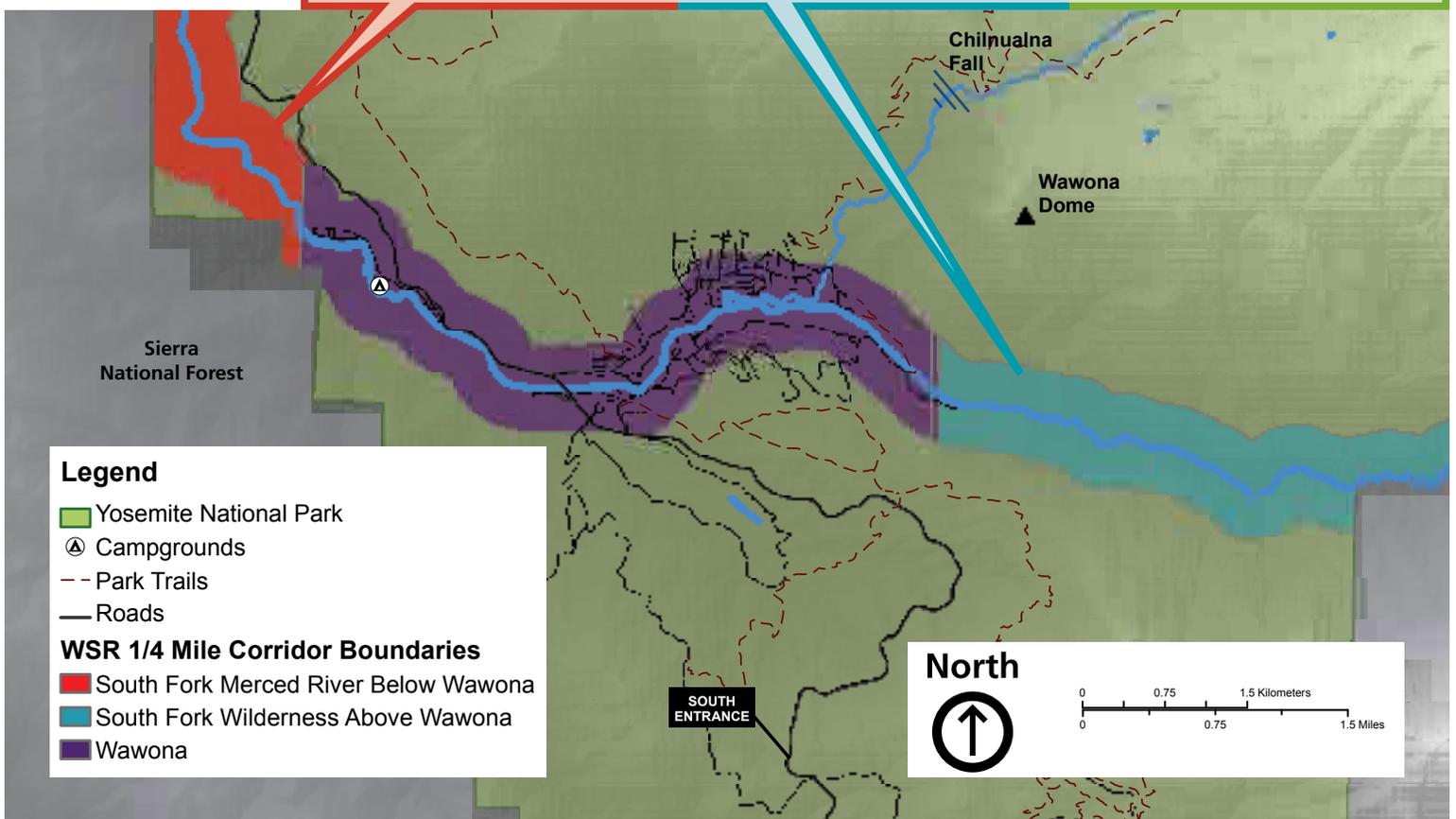
Visitors form these associations through a wide variety of activities. Some river experiences focus on active pursuits, such as hiking, biking, rock climbing, swimming, camping, boating, or fishing. Others see visitors expressing themselves creatively, whether through writing, painting, photography, or other art forms. Educational experiences appeal to others interested in the Yosemite setting, the natural processes that created it, or the park's history. Many activities have integral social elements, like picnicking or relaxing with friends or family in a beautiful setting. Finally, contemplative or reflective activities call to others; sitting alone on the riverbank in quiet enjoyment is one way some visitors experience the Valley's exemplary recreational values. These exemplary experiences are characterized by close contact with the river's resources and the ability to experience the river in different light, weather, and seasons.

Overall, people of all ages and abilities find a variety of exceptional and easily accessible recreation opportunities to experience the Merced River in Yosemite Valley. Attracted to the river, visitors can immerse themselves in their surroundings, taking in the sights, sounds, and feel of the river and its dramatic backdrop, relieving stress and connecting to the natural world.

Merced River Above Nevada Fall, and South Fork Merced River Above and Below Wawona (WILD classification)

Wild segments of the Merced River and South Fork Merced River flow from the heart of the Sierra Nevada, with its towering granite peaks and impressive forests. The spectacular, rugged expanses along these segments provide exemplary landscapes for wilderness experiences characterized by solitude, personal reflection, closeness to nature, independence, and self-reliance. Activities are oriented toward primitive travel, camping, exploration, and adventure.

Of the many exemplary recreational activities, a few are particularly distinctive. Hiking and backpacking close to the river, visitors can experience spectacular cascades in different seasons, from the sight, sound, and feel the power of the crashing waters in spring to the delicate beauty of plumes in drier months. Backpacking on a major segment of the John Muir Trail offers access to an internationally renowned multi-day Sierra Nevada wilderness trip, with gorgeous riverside views, undeveloped settings, and opportunities for solitude along the trail and at riverside camps. Off-trail hiking and the potential for class V kayaking along the South Fork of the Merced below Wawona are also relished.



I love the Merced River because you can swim in it.

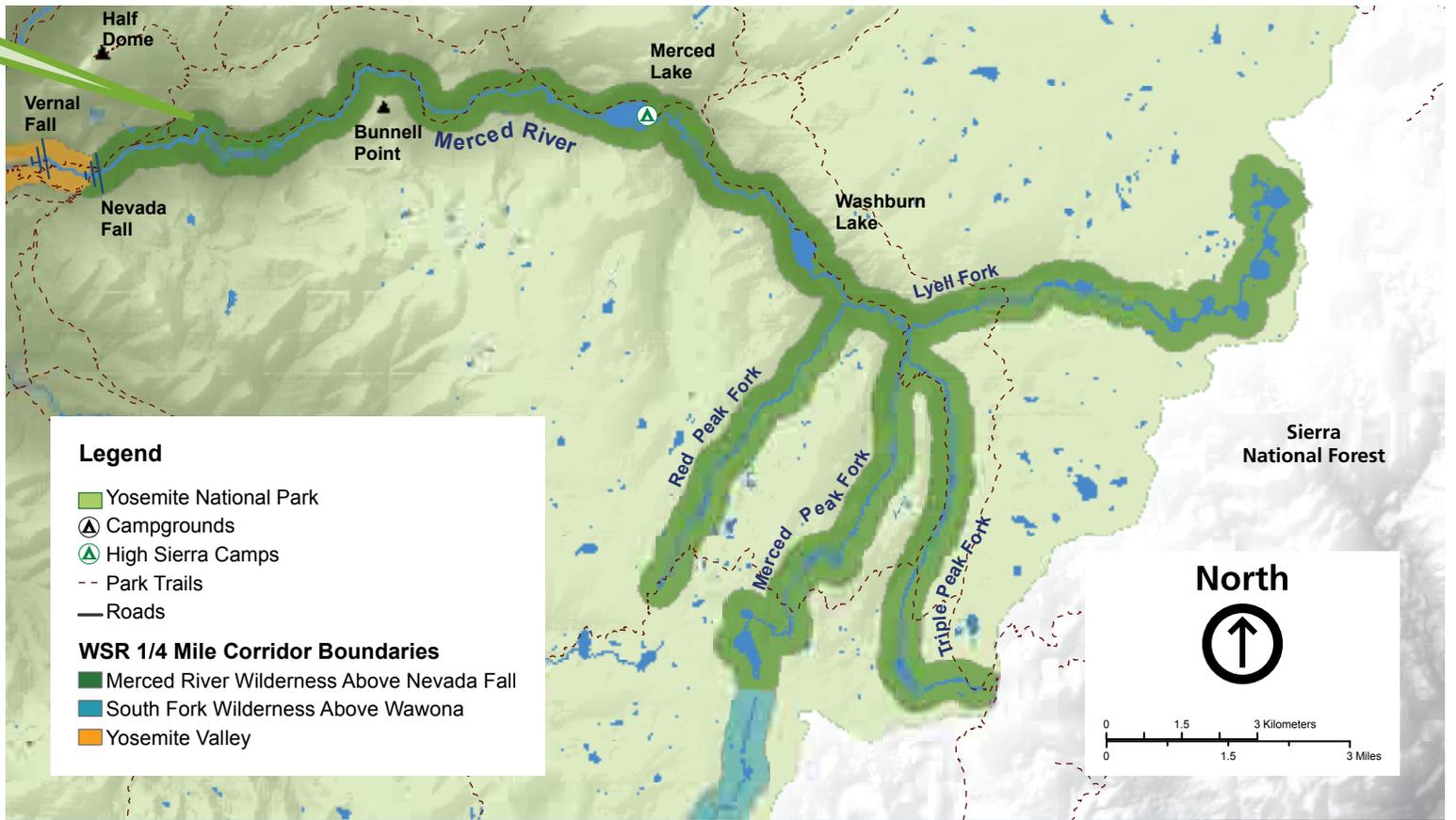
Public Scoping Correspondence # 30

My concern for this plan is the limiting the access to the river.

Public Scoping Correspondence #36

Yosemite's user capacity model should not unreasonably restrict access to outstandingly remarkable recreational values within the planning corridor.

Public Scoping Correspondence # 168



Above:
Merced Lake. Merced River Wilderness Above Nevada Fall Segment. NPS Photo.

Geologic Hydrologic Processes

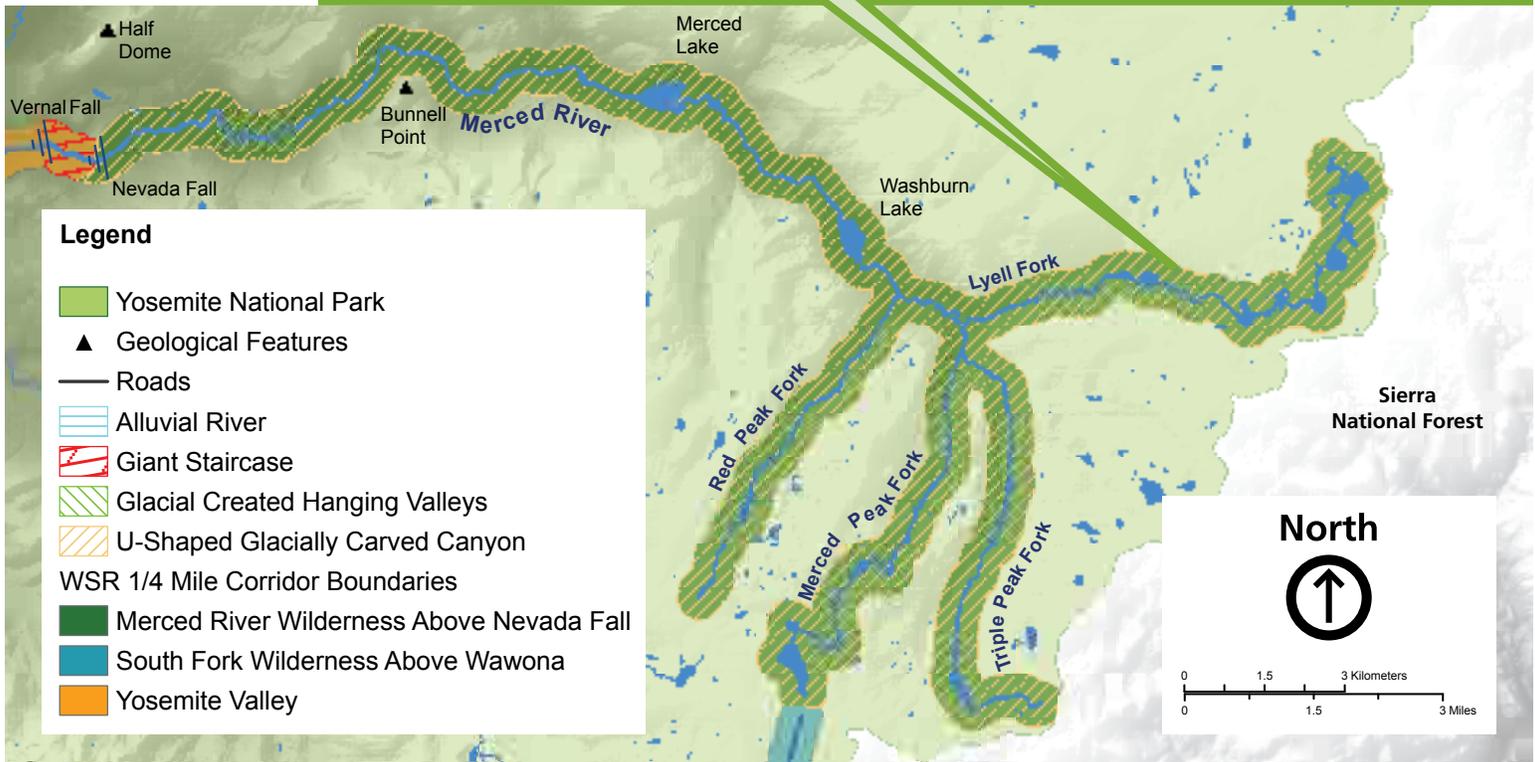
The Merced River and South Fork Merced River represent geologic and hydrologic processes that continue to shape the landscape. Glacial pathways, which the river partly determined and continues to follow, resulted in the rivers' variable gradients, featuring dramatic changes in river speed and volume. The rivers start in high alpine settings, drop down sheer cliffs and steep cascades at high speeds with large springtime volumes, and then calm in lakes and meandering segments before tumbling down more steep gradients. This hydrologic variability exemplifies classic stair-step river morphology.

Merced River Wilderness Above Nevada Fall (WILD classification)

This segment of the Merced River is characterized by a large-scale, U-shaped glacially-carved canyon. The section of the Merced River above Bunnell Point especially illustrates the relationship between geology and river course with a sweeping, glacially-sculpted granite canyon cradling the river.

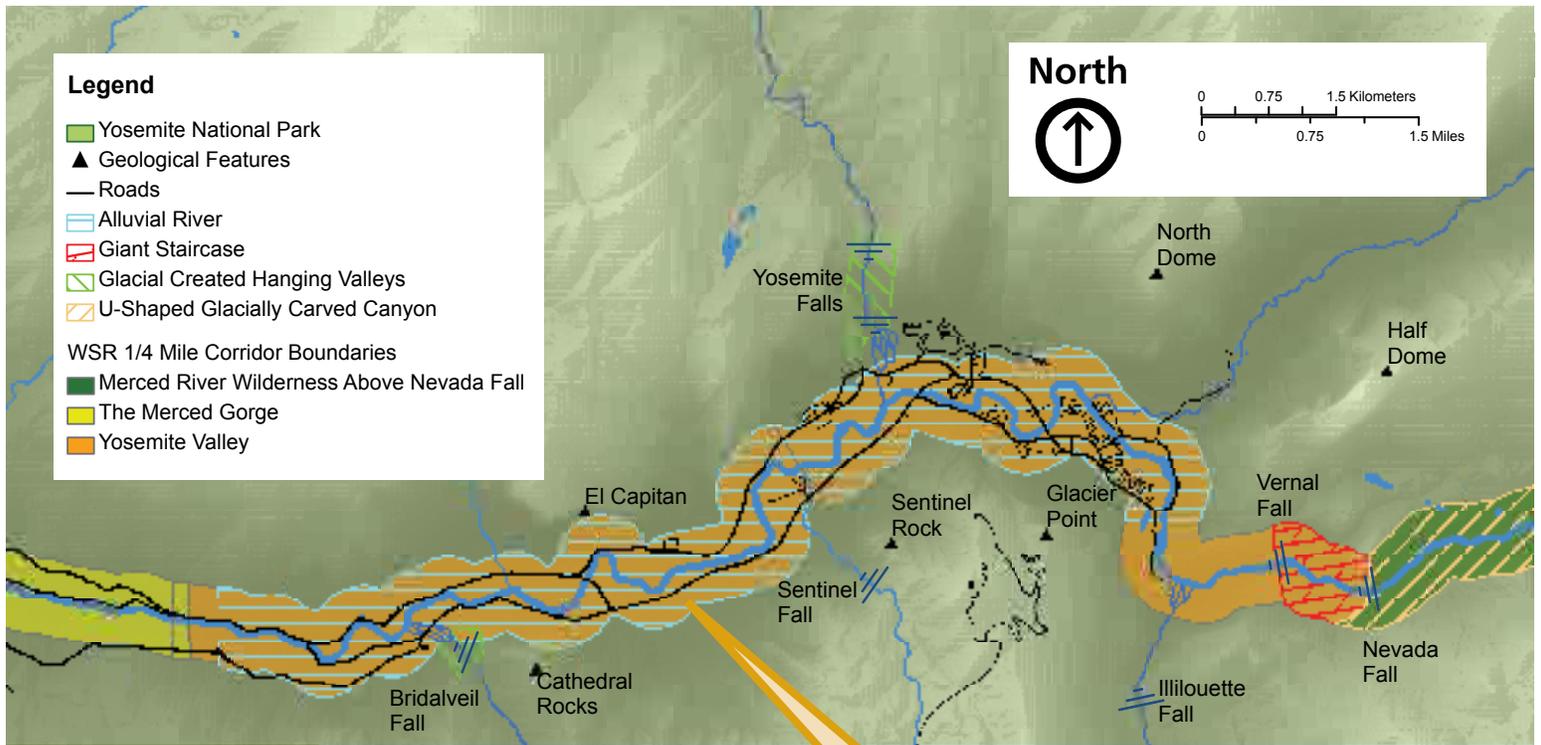


Above:
Merced River and Merced Lake. Merced River Wilderness Above Nevada Fall Segment. NPS Photo.



I love the Natural Evolving process(s).
Public Scoping Correspondence # 107

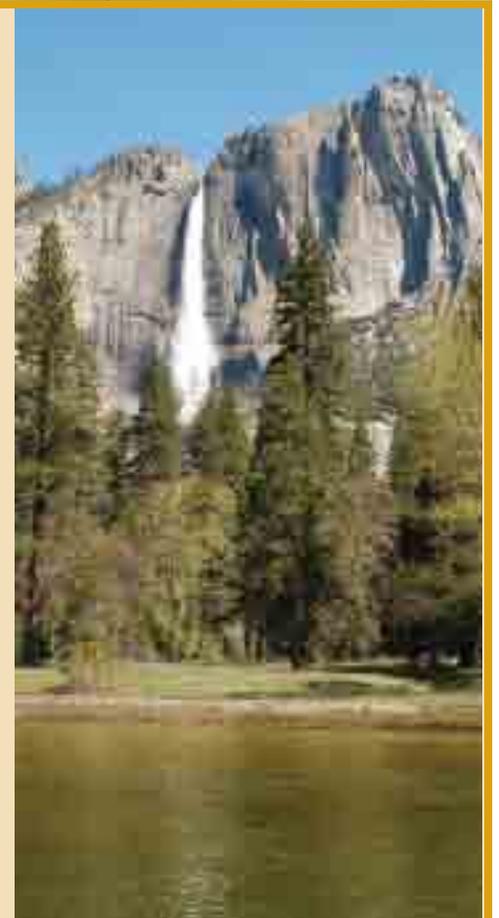
The Merced River is dynamic and clearly free. Around every corner there is majesty and mystery.
Public Scoping Correspondence # 454



Yosemite Valley (RECREATIONAL classification)

This river segment, famous for its glacially-carved landforms, is unique in the scale, variety, and sheer grandeur of its celebrated rock and water features:

- The *Giant Staircase*, which includes Vernal and Nevada Falls, is one of the finest examples of stair-step river morphology in the country. This feature also illustrates the variability of the Merced's hydrology due to abrupt elevation changes.
- El Capitan Moraine, located in the western part of the Yosemite Valley, marks a textbook example of a recessional moraine.
- Glacial action removed the slopes across which tributaries had formed, creating hanging valleys with world-renowned waterfalls. These include Bridalveil Fall and Yosemite Falls, the tallest waterfall in North America.
- From Happy Isles to Table Rock, the Merced River meanders quietly. This alluvial river is characterized by a gentle gradient, a robust flood regime, natural woody debris accumulation, and complex riparian vegetation. There are few examples in the Sierra Nevada of similar river morphology of this scale at this elevation (about 4,000 feet).



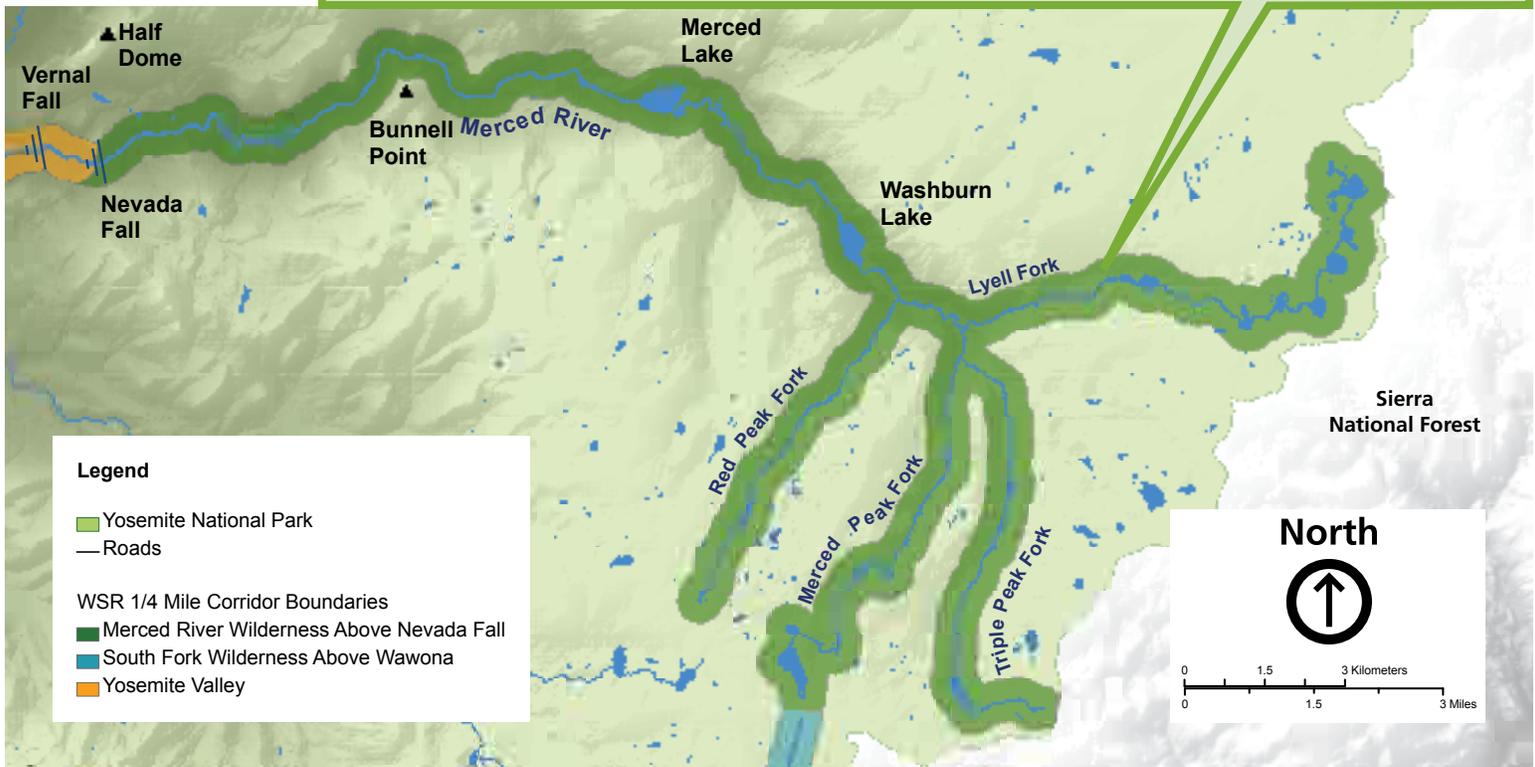
Above:
Merced River and Yosemite Falls.
Yosemite Valley Segment.
NPS Photo.

Scenery

Throughout its length, the Merced River flows through a scenic landscape that has few parallels. Whether these are views from the river or its banks and whether the views include El Capitan, Half Dome, Triple Divide Peak, or any of the other landmarks along the river, the Merced River provides a natural complement to Yosemite's world-renowned scenery. Depending on the stretch of river, the Merced provides a foreground of a flat valley, a rushing and boulder-strewn river, tall waterfalls, or serene lakes.

Merced River Wilderness Above Nevada Fall (WILD classification)

Starting at the headwaters on the Triple Peak Fork, the Merced River passes through chains of "paternoster" lakes, enters the upper Montane forest, and becomes walled in by a classic U-shaped glacial valley. Scenic landmarks visible from the river and its banks include Washburn and Merced lakes, Echo Valley, Bunnell Point, Little Yosemite Valley, Nevada Falls, and Liberty Cap. The long river segment of great visual variety and its uncompromised natural setting provide diverse, exceptional scenery, all with the river in the foreground.



The pristine beauty of this Corridor and the surrounding visual and sensory characteristics.

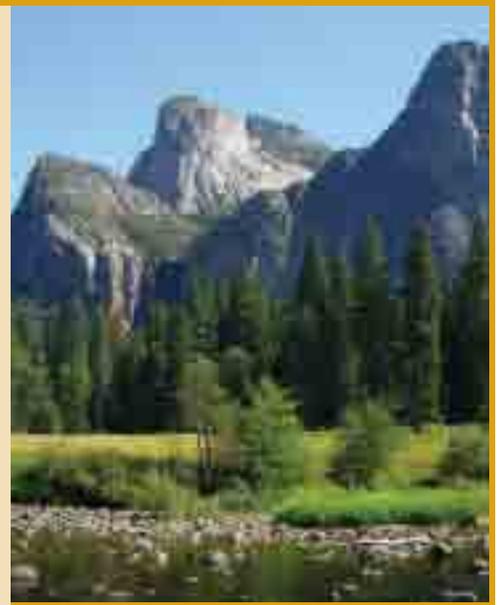
Public Scoping Correspondence #107 in response to the question *What do you love?*

The raw, untouched view of the wilderness, glaciation, natural erosions, and the whole experience.

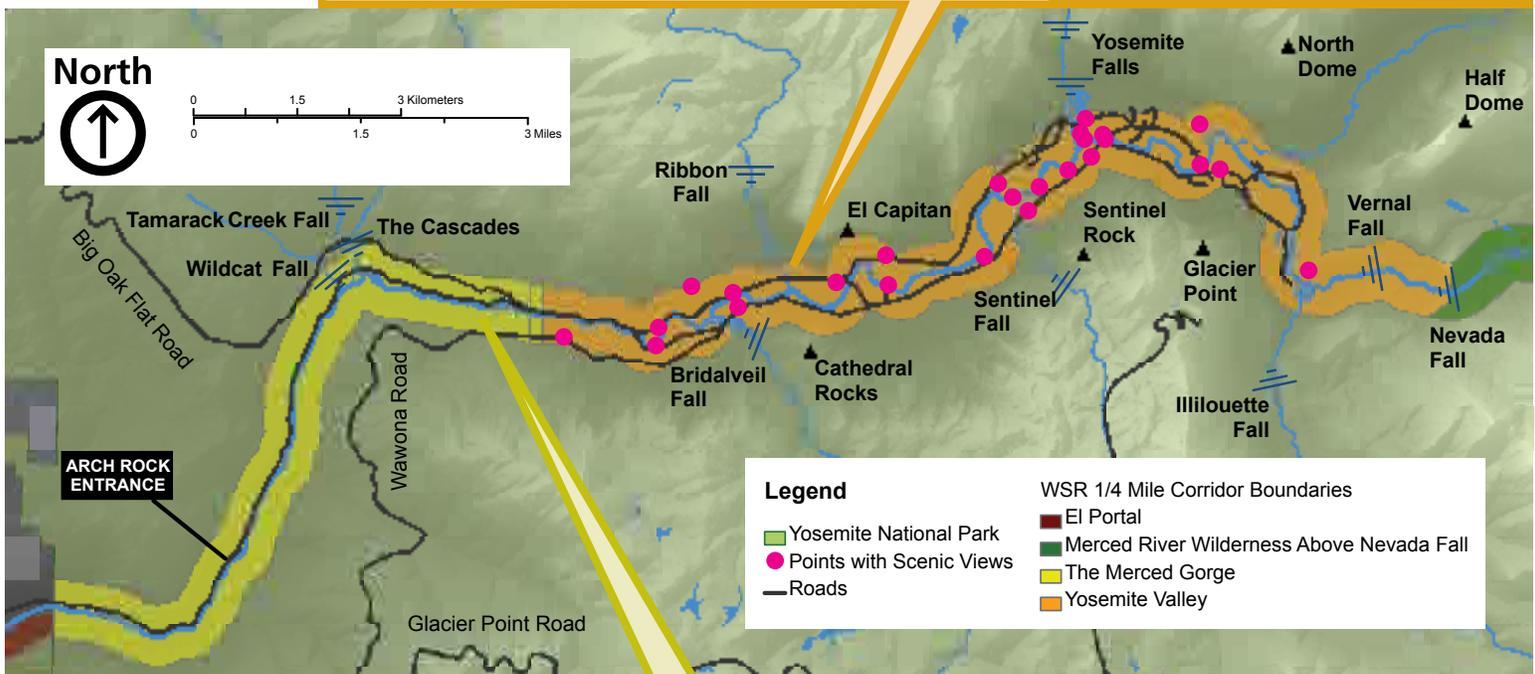
Public Scoping Correspondence #22

Yosemite Valley (RECREATIONAL classification)

The river enters Yosemite Valley at Nevada Falls, flowing through Emerald Pool and then over Vernal Falls. Once in the flat valley, the Merced provides the foreground to many of Yosemite's most famous landmarks. From the river and its banks, views consist of Yosemite and Bridalveil Falls, El Capitan, Half Dome, and other named and unnamed parts of the cliffs rimming the valley. Meandering through a sequence of compound oxbows, wetlands and meadows, the river and its related features provide broadened panoramas. Throughout the valley, views from the river and its banks encompass the lower Montane forest as it rises up to sheer rock faces of granite cliffs and talus slopes, with a flat valley bottom serving as a contrasting foreground. The juxtaposition of granite domes and waterfalls is unique, as is the intensity of the river-related views found in Yosemite Valley.



Above:
Bridalveil Meadow. *Yosemite Valley* Segment. NPS Photo.

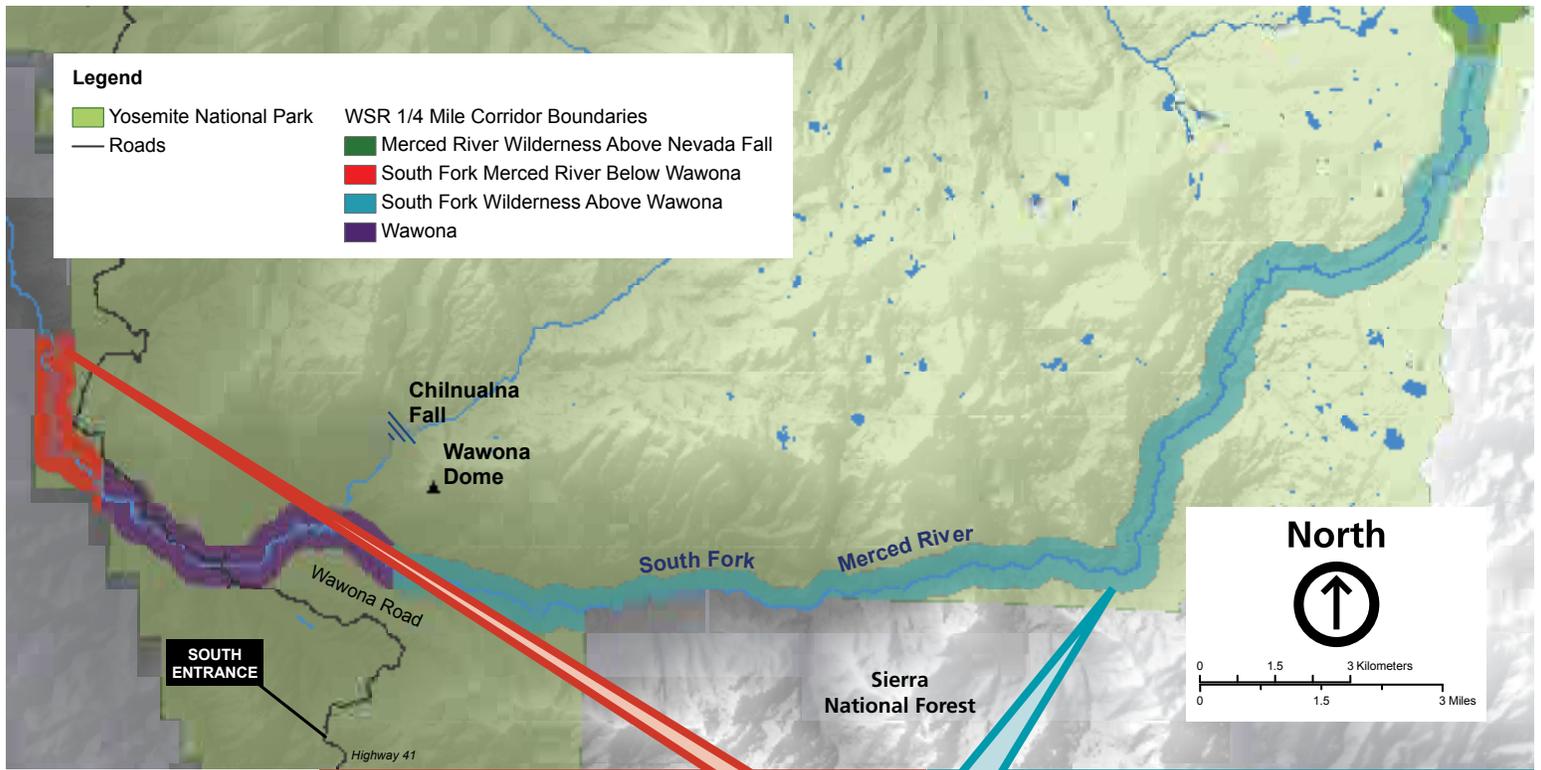


The Merced Gorge (SCENIC classification)

Descending from Yosemite Valley, the river becomes a continuous cascade in a narrow gorge littered by massive boulders and Arch and Elephant rocks rising above, all visible from the river and its banks. Dropping 2,000 feet in 14 miles, canyon walls rise steeply from the river and have many waterfalls cascading down to the river. Spring and fall bring special parades of colors, from redbuds and other flowering plants in spring to maples and other colorful trees in fall.



Above:
View of the Merced River. *The Merced Gorge* Segment. NPS Photo.



South Fork Merced River, both Above and Below Wawona (WILD classification)

The river in these stretches is largely inaccessible, with just a few trail crossings above Wawona and none below it. The scenery from the river and its banks is that of an unspoiled Sierra Nevada river valley, with views dominated by forest-cloaked hills, distant peaks, and an untamed river. These are some of the wildest views possible in the Sierra Nevada.



Above:
Merced River. *South Fork Merced River Above Wawona Segment*. NPS Photo.



Cultural

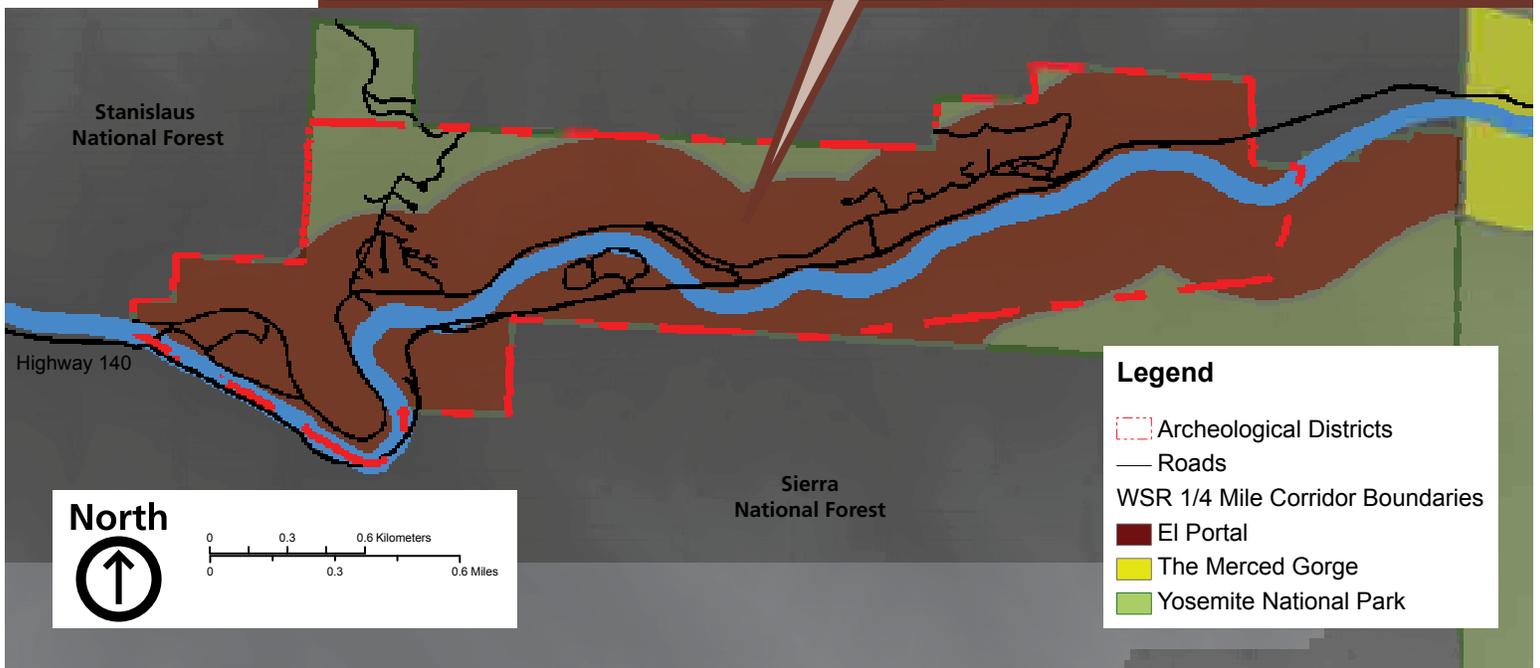
The continuum of human use along the Merced River and South Fork Merced River encompasses thousands of years of diverse people, cultures, and uses. American Indians and pioneering Euro-American groups flourished along these rivers because they provided reliable, year-round water in extraordinary settings. Evidence that reflects trade, travel, and settlement patterns include archeological resources, American Indian cultural resources, historic structures, and historic cultural landscapes. Today, these features are protected in place for their cultural and historic significance. Laws are in place to restrict public disclosure of specific locations of archeological sites and American Indian cultural resources.

El Portal (RECREATIONAL classification)

El Portal's location between Yosemite Valley and the San Joaquin Valley made it an important place of settlement, subsistence, and trade along the Merced River. The steep, narrow canyon at El Portal includes river terraces with level lands on which villages were built. The presence of Great Basin and Pacific Coast artifacts indicate that El Portal was a location of continuous, far-reaching traffic and trade. In fact, the El Portal Archeological District contains some of the oldest deposits in the Sierra foothills, with data important to interpreting cultural history as old as 9,500 years. Particularly significant is the Johnny Wilson Ranch, a rare example of an American Indian homestead.



Above:
Merced River. *El Portal Segment*. NPS Photo.



Yosemite Valley (RECREATIONAL classification)

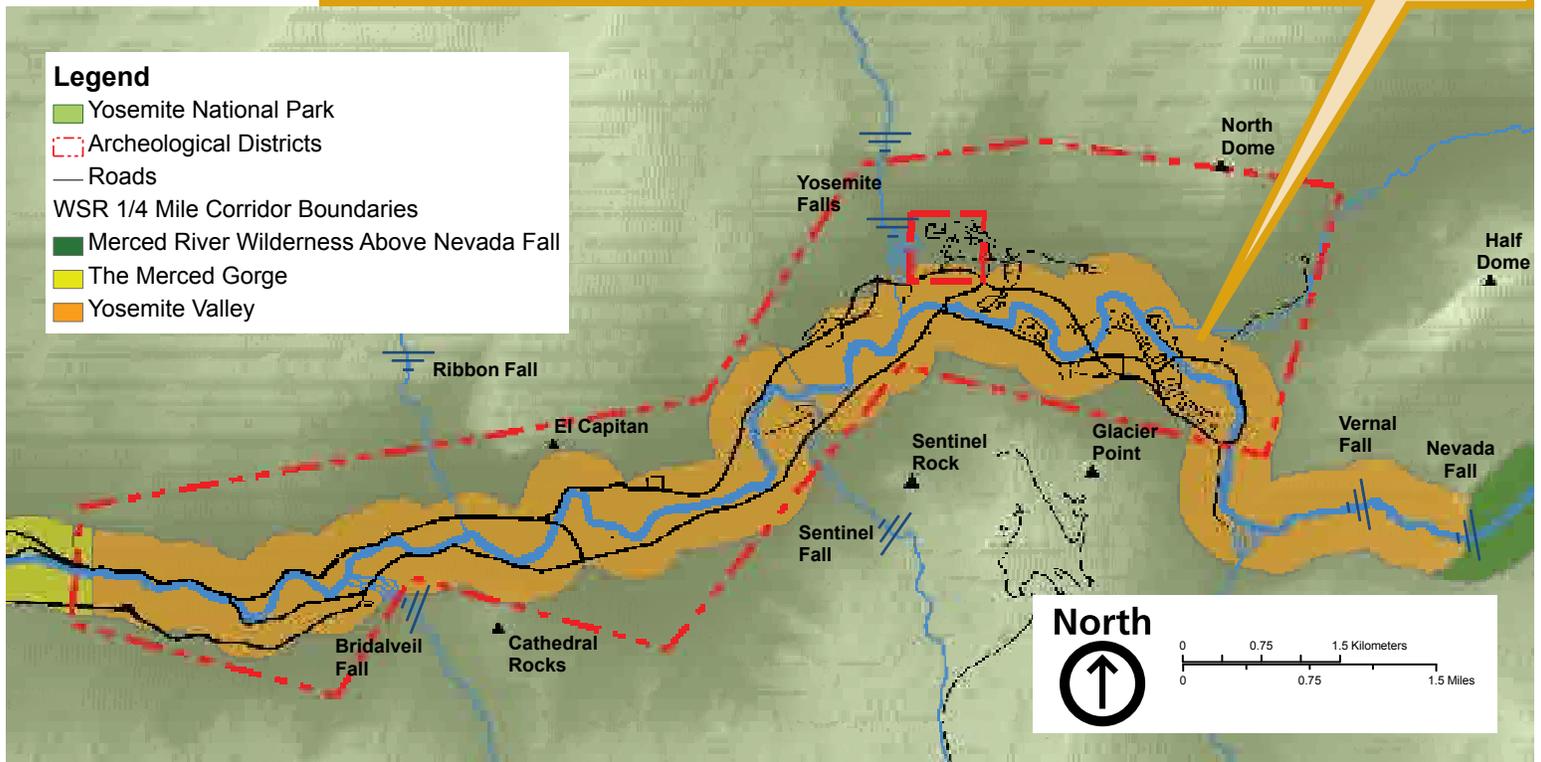
Many sites in the Yosemite Valley Archeological District are river related and reflect the wide variety of human needs that the river and valley have accommodated for thousands of years. Whether it was drinking water, a sheltering climate, building or weaving materials, or abundant food sources, the Merced River united the threads making the Valley a hospitable place for people to live for thousands of years, well into the twentieth century.

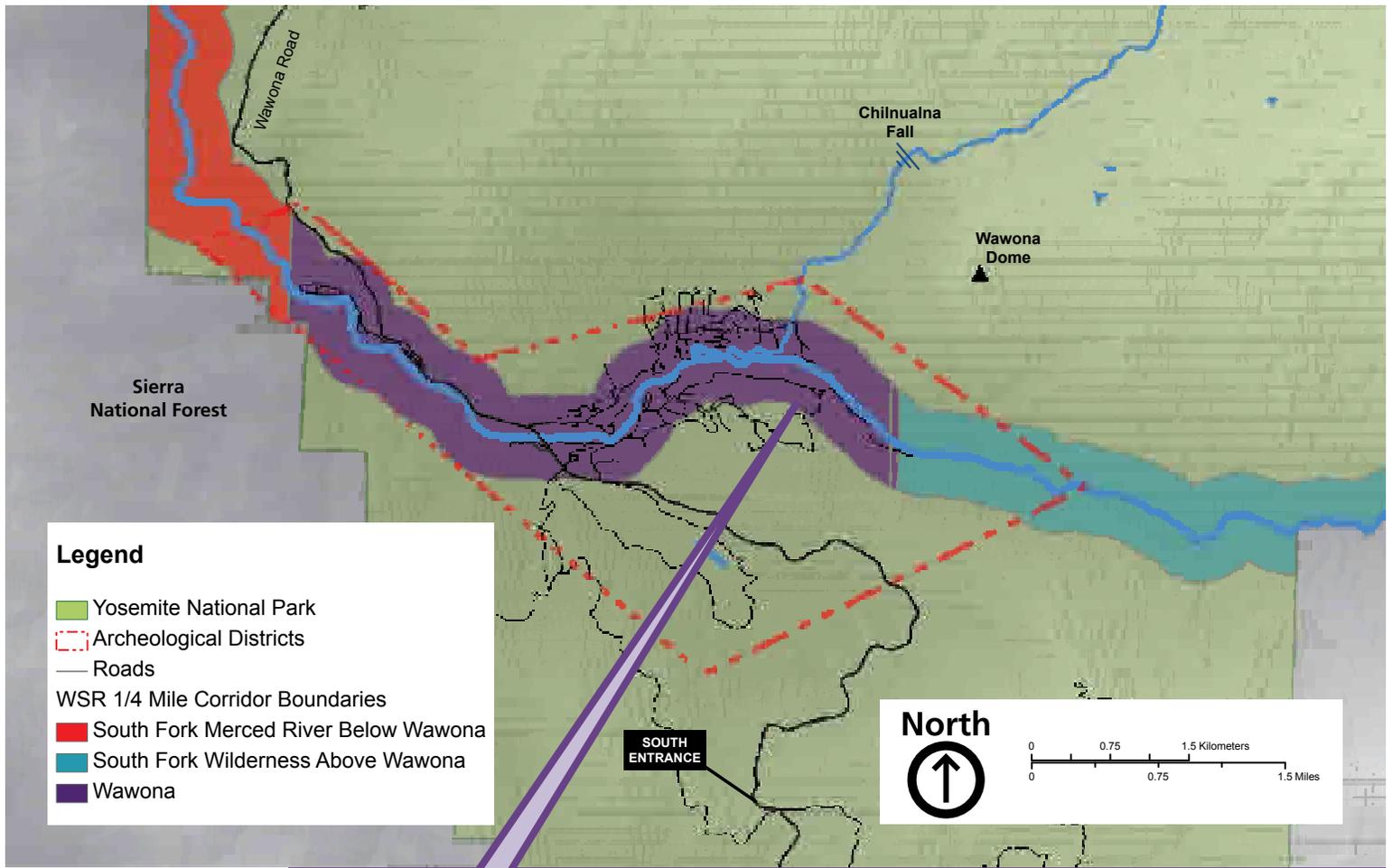
The Yosemite Valley Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) represents a rare occurrence of continuing connection of places and people from before 1851 to the present, with the river at the heart of this cultural system. The contributing elements of this TCP include river-related and traditionally used plant species, prehistoric village sites, and spiritual areas. American Indian groups assign strong spiritual values to the river and Yosemite Valley, attaching names and stories to geological and other special features in the Merced River corridor. These groups maintain their rights to practice their religion and ceremonies as they have for thousands of years.



Above:
Ceremonial roundhouse. *Yosemite Valley*
Segment. NPS Photo.

The historic circulation patterns and spatial organization of Yosemite Valley provide a designed visitor experience to and across the river. River-related environmental variables drove the siting and development of the vehicular, pedestrian, and equestrian routes connecting buildings, campgrounds, road, and trails within the scenic landscape. Today, the circulation system of vehicular, pedestrian, and equestrian routes in the Yosemite Valley retains a high degree of integrity to the historic period from 1851 to 1942.





Wawona
 (RECREATIONAL classification)

Built in 1868 by Yosemite’s first guardian, Galen Clark, the Wawona Covered Bridge boasts state significance within transportation, entertainment, and recreation contexts. The bridge embodies the distinctive characteristic of a unique type of construction and is the only historic covered bridge in the western region of the National Park Service.



Above:
 The Covered Bridge. Wawona Segment. NPS Photo.

The Merced River corridor has been home to people for nearly 10,000 years, and it still contains vibrant communities.

Public Scoping Correspondence #181

All existing ‘historic’ structures need to be repaired and preserved. They have value.

Public Scoping Correspondence #75



List of contributors

The following Yosemite National Park staff contributed to the development of these Outstandingly Remarkable Values:

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Comment

Now that the outstandingly remarkable values have been identified, the next steps for the park's Merced River Plan team include assessing their overall condition and documenting where they are located in the river corridor. In turn, this information will be used to help inform the Merced River Plan's range of alternatives.

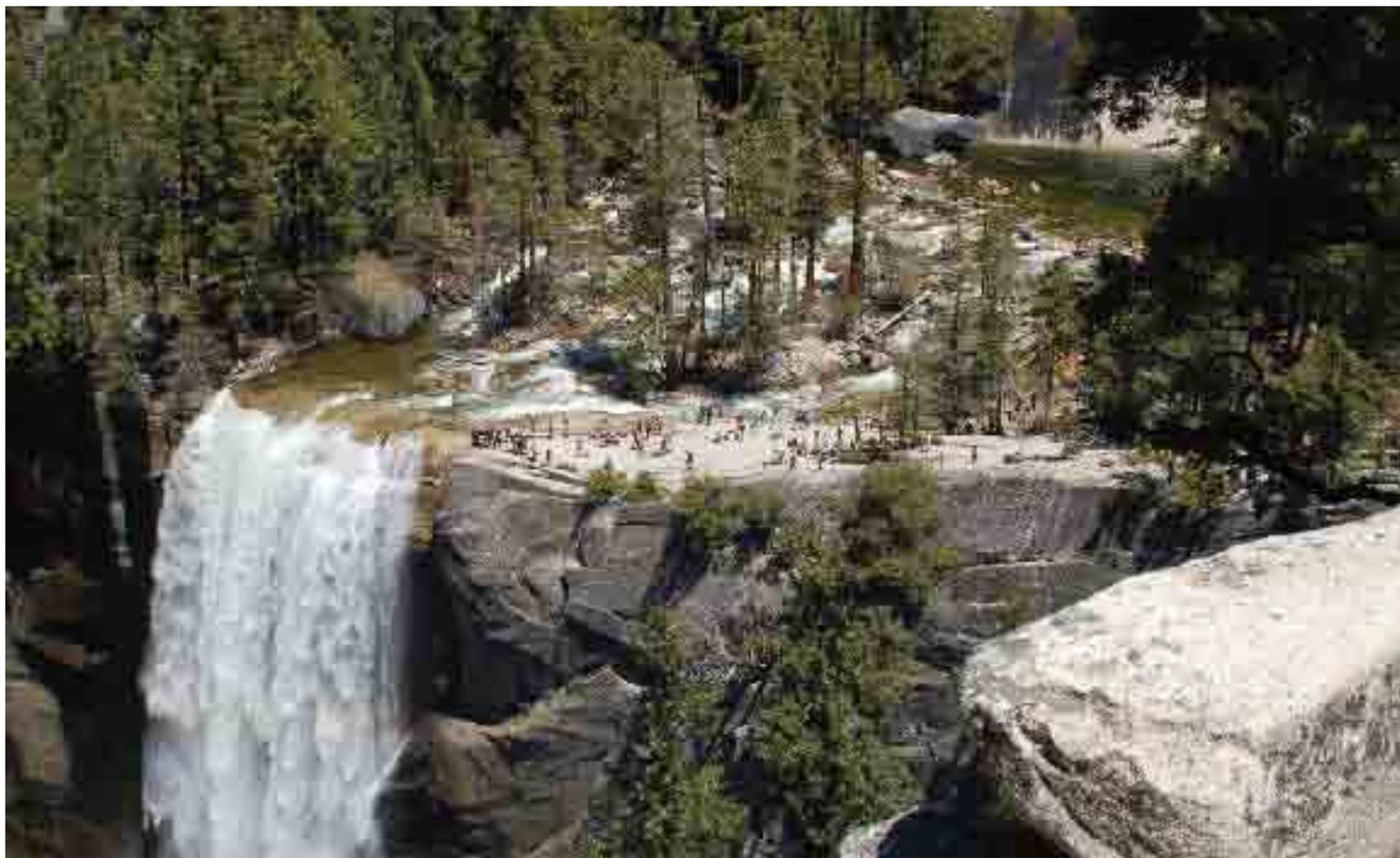
Here is how you can help:

SHARE your knowledge of specific locations where the various river values are located.
CONTRIBUTE your observations and knowledge of the condition of river values.
DISCUSS your ideas for how the NPS can best protect and enhance river values.

This draft report is available for review and comment through July 2010, after which time, the NPS will bring comments into the next steps of the planning process. The best way to comment is through the Planning, Environment, Public Comment (PEPC) website. Please visit www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp_comment.htm and click on the link to PEPC.

Comments will also be accepted via U.S. mail at the following address:

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Merced River Plan ORVs
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389



Above:
Vernal Fall from Clark Point. *Yosemite Valley Segment*. NPS Photo.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp.htm>



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