



Scenic Vista Management Plan

What is the Background?

Over three-million visitors come to Yosemite National Park each year to see its natural wonders and scenic grandeur. The breathtaking scenery is a key reason Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were the first areas designated by the federal government for public benefit in 1864. The Tunnel View Rehabilitation in 2008, pictured above, reestablished the expansive vista of Yosemite Valley that recalls what the first European Americans saw in 1851 at nearby Inspiration Point.

Why is a Plan Needed?

There is currently no consistent process to prioritize vistas for management, and the lack of a comprehensive effort has allowed many vistas to remain obscured. Past vista management has reestablished scenic vistas at a rate of about three vistas per decade. In addition, the 1980 Yosemite General Management Plan called for the creation of a vista management plan.

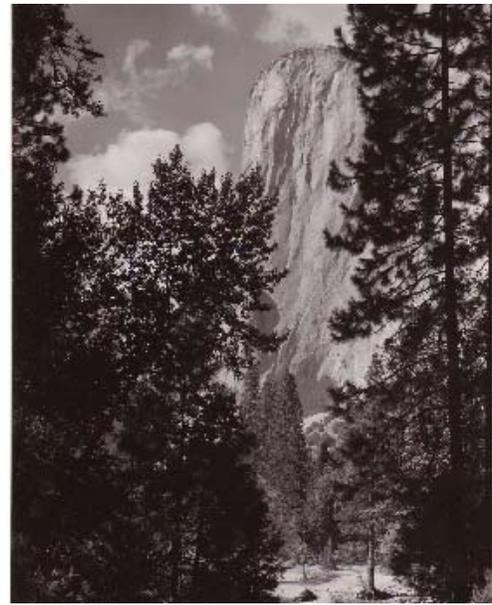
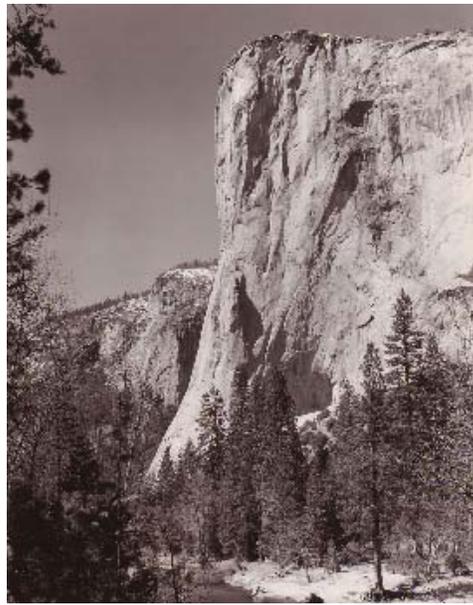
Particularly in the Yosemite Valley, many vistas were once visible, due to open, extensive meadows, and are now obscured by vegetation. The development of a framework for evaluating and prioritizing vista management actions will ensure that the natural and cultural resources and values of Yosemite National Park remain unimpaired.

What does the Plan Call for?

This plan would provide a systematic program for documenting, protecting, and reestablishing Yosemite's important vistas, consistent with the natural processes and human influences that created them. This plan would:

- Reestablish and maintain important historic views;
- Develop an objective process for selecting and ranking vistas for treatment;
- Develop target conditions and identify appropriate vegetation management actions to reestablish scenic vistas;
- Reestablish scenic vistas, whenever practicable, by restoring natural species composition, structure, and function to systems, using traditional American Indian vegetation management practices, including hand pulling and fire.

What is Scenic Vista Management?



The two photographs above were taken in 1940 from Southside Drive, before and after vista management, to illustrate the effectiveness. This once popular historic vista of El Capitan was first photographed by Carleton Watkins in 1868. The image was selected to represent Yosemite National Park in a 1934 National Park Service postage stamp series. Over time, this iconic vista became obscured by encroaching forest. Vista management would allow visitors greater access to the dramatic scenery that first brought attention to Yosemite National Park.

What are the Alternatives?

This plan presents five alternatives that address how vistas would be prioritized, treated and the intensity of management actions.

- No Action.
- Use Scenic Value to Determine Intensity of Vista Clearing.
- Use Ecological Conditions to Determine Intensity of Vista Clearing (Preferred Alternative).
- Use Professional Team Assessment to Prioritize Vistas for Treatment.
- Use Professional Team Assessment with Ecological Conditions to Determine Intensity of Vista Clearing.

How can I Participate?

The public release of this plan commences a thirty day public comment period. You can participate and learn more in the following ways:

- Visit the Scenic Vista Management Plan web site to review the plan and the latest information at www.nps.gov/yose/naturescience/scenic-vistas.htm
- Attend an open house in Yosemite Valley East Auditorium to discuss the plan with park staff
- Request a copy at yose_planning@nps.gov. Please note that this email address is only to request documents or information related to plans and projects
- Send comments to the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) web site at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/yose. Click on the “Open for Comments” link at the top of the page. Click on the “Scenic Vista Management Plan Environmental Assessment” link, and enter your comments
- You may also mail or fax your comments to:

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Attention: Scenic Vista Management Plan
P.O Box 577, Yosemite, California 95389
FAX: (209) 379-1294

The park considers all public comments in making a decision, which will be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), if appropriate. If the FONSI is approved, the preferred alternative will be implemented in fall 2010.