

Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition (YVCC)
c/o Brian H. Ouzounian, Co-Founder
Comments to the Draft ORV
Merced River Plan
07-31-10

Dear Planning Team:

Please regard this as a supplement to the comments made at the 06/30/10 Open House in Yosemite Valley concerning ORVs and your Draft ORV Report

Cultural:

We remain skeptical that our (YVCC) comments from our previous scoping submittals and thousands of petitioners have had an affect on your work. Cultural ORV has to include family auto-based drive-in camping (in tents) which when putting aside the autos, builds upon the Native American manner in which the park was visited and is visited today. Since the few who ventured into the Valley in late 1800's to camp up to millions of visitors attempt each year now to enjoy this family cultured activity of camping. To say it is not a cultural ORV is to be either ignorant or have a purpose-driven disregard for the truth in visitation and enjoyment of the Valley resources. If all the children were able to write in, you would be swamped. The grandparents speak for them as they give their testimony of how they pass on the enjoyment of the river resources to their children and grandparents in legacy form. They pass on the stories from generation to generation: from marriage to marriage. You can read about their desires and experiences in the petition comments. They repeat a familiar theme with high regard for the family cultural experience of camping in the warmth of Yosemite Valley and in the chill of the Merced River on a float (in their own rafts). Often, the Draft mentions international famed activities; we suggest to you that family auto-based drive-in tent camping is of equal or greater international fame; yet, sadly, it is out of reach due to the Park removal of sites along the River. We believe that this activity deserves its rightful place on the list of priorities of study and enhancement as a Cultural ORV; that no other activity along 2 or 3 miles of the 81 mile Merced River matches the test of use with enjoyment and preservation of values set aside for the Park by President Lincoln. In a week's time in a riverside campsite, values are absorbed for the most part in similar repetitive fashion around the picnic table, in tents, around the campfire, and while floating on the Merced River as a family. The birds and coyotes are heard; the deer and the bear are seen; the bats at dusk are seen eating the moths; the dogwood is seen in bloom; the raccoons and squirrels are seen foraging. The stories of all these are revisited each year and retold each year to young and old. It truly represents a

traditional family cultural experience beyond recreational. Maybe with out some of the bike riding (personal equipment) or rafting (personal floatation devices), this activity is similar to our Native American families long in the tradition of riverside camping. This is where values of our fathers and mothers are passed. This is part of the Lure and Lore of Yosemite.

So, how will you, the Planning Staff, study this ORV in a fair way?

How will you give it the fair shake it deserves?

How will you distinguish the above from the fixed roof lodging and for-profit visitation?

Will you come to conclude that this is the only acceptable park policy that fully appreciates the River resources balanced with its preservation and visitation?

Will you make interpretive resources important to the camping public to teach how to preserve that which they love without fencing off river banks?

Will you preserve this basic long standing ORV in its purity or will you conclude that it needs to be managed and further manipulated?

For 30 years we have tried to illustrate what millions of camping visitors already have known. Team after team of Park planners plundered and scuttled it. You are urged to embrace the good and obvious in evaluating family auto based drive-in camping in our Yosemite Valley and study it in a cultural as well as recreational theater as originally intended and traditionally exercised.

With all due respect,

Brian H. Ouzounian

Co Founder

Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition