

Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition (YVCC)

c/o Brian H. Ouzounian, Co-Founder

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September 2, 2004

Mr. Darren C. Rose
Deputy District Director
Congressman George Radanovich
19th District, California

Sent Via Email
darren.rose@sbcglobal.net

Re: Invalid Revised Merced River Plan

Dear Darren:

This follows up on our meeting at the hearing by the National Park Service on August 19, 2004, in Mariposa and our telephone conversation Monday, September 2, 2004. You may recall my opening testimony with the question of why there were no hearings in Southern California such as San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles or north in Sacramento.

As I indicated to you, I have personally been involved in Yosemite planning since the dawn of the 1980 GMP (General Management Plan). That's close to 25 years. I have visited NPS officials in Washington on my own dime, responded to just about every plan, and co founded Yosemite Valley Campers' Coalition.

Although I have other issues to discuss, by your encouragement, I am writing this memo for the congressman's immediate attention to be at the forefront of the scoping process of the current NPS study on the Merced River. Since the 1980 GMP was issued, it came to my, and my co-founder's (Angela Caldera), that the NPS has not directly notified campers as respondents to any of their plans.

I was informed by NPS officials (Superintendent Finley) that the GMP basically came from those who used the concession lodging. I believe the total respondents for that plan was about 6,500. This startled me in that of earliest record, before designated campgrounds, there were an estimated 15,000 campsites in the Valley. Even NPS literature in about 1968 stated 1,008 campgrounds in the Valley. How could 6500 non-camper respondents carry any weight for master planning efforts? I began to be suspicious and remain the same to this day.

Imagine the most predominant user of the park, millions upon millions, left out of the planning process! How irresponsible. Do the math - average family per site x number of sites

(pick a year, 15,000 or 1,008) x 90 summer days plus do the same with assumptions for pre and post summer campers, and you get a huge number by anyone's calculation.

For over two decades, I have asked the park service to intentionally invite comments from the registry of campers since they hold the database for the campground reservations. I asked Senior NPS officials Maureen Finnerty and Chris Andres in Washington, D.C. to advance this idea. I was shuffled off to John Reynolds, Regional NPS Director, who refused to implement my/our request and refused to meet with me. Still, as we formed the Yosemite Valley Campers' Coalition, we persisted at every opportunity to make this request. Our group is small due to resources but we have a very large constituency. We organized a meeting in Los Angeles in about 1998 of 55 members and one NPS official. A lively meeting it was but it carried the same distaste of the NPS for leaving us out.

We believe that the bridges, campgrounds, and original campsites are historic....every bit as historic as Camp 4, which is in the Federal registry of Historical Places due to the results of the Climbers' law suit against our government. Why do we have to sue for the same accommodation???

This letter is to once again urge the Congressman to consider demanding the NPS to survey the campers' database prior to closing the scoping session, which is currently scheduled for September 10th. I cannot imagine any responsible reason to the contrary.

As I have written to the Congressman on a couple of occasions and received no reply, I would much appreciate and look forward to one on this occasion as soon as possible. A face to face meeting would be preferable. Time is of the essence.

Best Regards,

Brian H. Ouzounian