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# NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2000

## Clinton signs Sand Dunes park bill

By MICHAEL SANDERSON  
Denver Post Washington Bureau

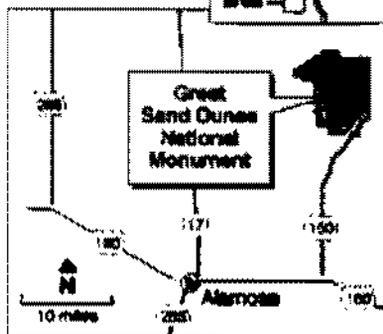
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**Nov. 23, 2000** - WASHINGTON - President

Clinton quietly signed a bill Wednesday turning Great Sand Dunes National Monument near Alamosa into the nation's newest national park, bringing a remarkably fast legislative effort across the finish line.

### Bill signed

President Clinton on Friday signed a bill to make Great Sand Dunes National Monument the country's next national park.



The Denver Post

Administration officials say they hope to finish the upgrade with the purchase of the 100,000-acre Baca Ranch before Clinton leaves office. And a visit by Clinton to the evershifting dunes, the tallest in North America, is not out of the question.

"I've always said that national parks are destination points for tourists, while monuments are stops on the way to parks," said Dion Stewart, spokesman for the grassroots Citizens for the Monument to Park Conversion Committee.

"I think it will have a beneficial economic impact on the valley. It won't be the end of the valley's water wars by any means, but (Clinton's approval) will take a big burden off one sector of the resource."

Located southwest of Pueblo across the mountains in the San Luis Valley, the dunes themselves cover 38,000 acres of the valley floor and rise 700 feet against the Sangre de Cristo range.

The land covered in the bill also includes mountain meadows, alpine tundra and the 14,165-foot Kit Carson Peak. The ecosystem includes a diverse collection of dune plants, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, mountain bluebirds and ground squirrels.

But the real prize for supporters is the neighboring Baca Ranch, which has been at the center of bitter water fights in the valley for years. Valley officials and farmers are hoping federal ownership will put an end to repeated efforts to turn the ranch into a water farm for the Front Range.

U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Loveland, and co-sponsor U.S. Rep. Scott McInnis, R-Grand Junction, were overjoyed.

"I'm excited for the people of the San Luis Valley," Allard said. "They worked hard. This was a locally driven proposal. It easily meets the standards of a park."

A national park designation generally gives a site better status than a monument. It typically draws more tourists and can mean greater funding. Legislators noted that it took 14 years to win approval of Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, but the dunes bill was done in one.

Ray Wright, president of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, was pleased with the signing but said it won't end future attempts to export the valley's water.

"In the West, with water in increasingly short supply, the valley will continue to be viewed as a source to cover someone else's ills," Wright said. "We haven't ever had a time when we didn't have a water war, and we can't assume this will be the end of them."

Clinton's approval Wednesday surprised no one, of course. The bill fit neatly into his drive to build a "lands legacy" before leaving office. But the bill caused a big split in Colorado's congressional delegation. U.S. Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colorado Springs, opposed the upgrade, calling the dunes "a pile of sand" that doesn't merit park status.

The park will not be created until the secretary of the interior decides the government has enough land with enough "diversity of resources."

That basically means buying the Baca Ranch. Congress put about \$8.5 million into the federal budget, but the price of the ranch is expected to be as high as \$35 million. An intermediary like the Nature Conservancy is expected to make up the difference, then be paid back by future congressional appropriations.

*Denver Post correspondent Mark H. Hunter contributed to this report.*

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# Saving Yosemite

Interior secretary has a credible plan

**I**nterior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has been a conscientious steward of the nation's natural resources. As his eight-year tenure draws to a close, he deserves particular credit for his plan to restore and preserve the spectacular Yosemite Valley by curbing vehicular traffic and controlling crowds that threaten to overwhelm this precious national park.

In unveiling his plan, Babbitt noted that his goal "is to make sure visitors spend time appreciating the natural beauty of the park, rather than focusing on where to park."

The plan calls for removing several roads and converting others to trails accessible only by bicyclists and hikers. The northern road that borders the base of El Capitan would become a trail. The plan also would pare the number of parking spaces for day visitors from more than 2,000 to 550. To help compensate for this reduction, Babbitt would create an additional 1,600 parking spaces outside the valley, while encouraging day visitors to take shuttle buses or trams into the park itself.

Babbitt maintains that reducing auto traffic by 60 percent would make it possible for a greater number of visitors to enjoy Yosemite's vistas. "You can't love Yosemite to death with too many people," the secretary said. "But you can choke it to death with exhaust fumes while looking for parking."

He's right. With nearly 4 million

visitors a year, the park is beset by traffic gridlock. On a typical summer's weekend, 7,000 cars wend their way through clogged roads. Yosemite's future, which has been debated for the last two decades, hinges on reducing auto traffic and the attendant smog that fouls the air and spoils scenic views.

Balancing public access and conservation is crucial to preserving Yosemite. Babbitt isn't looking to ban cars from the Yosemite Valley so much as he's trying to alleviate the traffic congestion that causes tempers to flare and frustrates those who want to experience the many wonders of this treasure.

In 1980, the National Park Service adopted a 10-year plan that was supposed to preserve the Yosemite Valley's natural beauty. It called for removing private motor vehicles from the valley, shifting many of the public buildings outside the

park's western edge and reducing overnight accommodations. But it was never implemented, so the valley has become even more congested.

To his credit, Babbitt has seized the initiative to preserve the park, which encompasses about 1,200 square miles of wild lands, including groves of majestic Sequoias, a glacially sculpted valley replete with mighty waterfalls, sheer cliffs and exquisite rock formations.

Having declared Yosemite Valley "one of nature's most awesome creations," Babbitt is rightly committed to its preservation.



A late autumn sunset falls on El Capitan and the Yosemite valley.

FROM CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT  
SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE 11-22-00

# New mining rules protect federal land

Government says they could cost industry up to \$484 million and 6,100 new jobs

By Traci Watson  
USA TODAY

Strict new rules published Tuesday by the Clinton administration are expected to reduce the environmental damage of mining on federal land in the West but also result in 5% to 30% less mining activity, the government estimates.

The rules include a major new provision: Federal officials can deny approval of any new mining that would do "substantial irreparable harm" to irreplaceable land. Environmentalists have complained that the old rules allowed mining that destroyed even the most beautiful or historically important land.

The rules apply to mines for gold, silver, copper and other minerals on land belonging to the Bureau of Land Management. While the BLM is not as much

of a household name as the National Park Service, it manages nearly one-eighth of the land in the United States, some 264 million acres. All of it is in Western states such as Oregon and Utah.

Millions of people hike, ride all-terrain vehicles, fish and hunt on BLM land every year, and their numbers are growing. Ranchers graze livestock on BLM pastures, and timber companies harvest trees from BLM forests.

The new rules, which replace regulations that haven't been rewritten since 1980, mark a substantial shift in attitude for an agency that environmentalists have often derided as the "Bureau of Livestock and Mines."

"The Clinton administration has raised the environmental bar," said Alan Septoff, reform campaign director of the

Mineral Policy Center. "When it comes to mining on public lands, some of the worst mine proposals can now be rejected."

For example, Septoff said, under the new rules, the BLM would probably not have approved the mining of Montana's Spirit Mountain, which sat on an Indian reservation. "It was a sacred mountain to these tribes, and now it's gone. What was once a mountain is now a big pit," he said.

The new rules also require more time-consuming and complex permits for some mines. And in a victory for taxpayers, every mine on BLM land must post bond to pay for cleanup if the mine becomes an environmental disaster. The requirements for the bonds are also being tightened so the BLM isn't left with a worthless piece of paper if a mine goes under.

These new provisions should help prevent taxpayers from having to foot the bill for mine cleanup, which they have to do fairly often.

Environmentalists welcomed the new rule but found fault with a provision they said would lead to more dumping of toxic waste from mines onto BLM land.

The mining industry and state officials criticized the new rules' potential effect on jobs and the economy. Federal economists estimate that the new rules could cost the mining industry from \$164 million to \$484 million in lost mineral production. It also could result in 2,100 to 6,100 fewer new jobs.

"We believe it's going to be a detriment to hard-rock mining and mineral development," said Rino Maddalena, a spokesman for the National Mining Association.

The state with the most to lose is Nevada, which has major gold and silver deposits.

"This is terrible news for the state of Nevada," said Rep. Jim Gibbons, R-Nev. He said Nevada mining companies were already mulling court challenges to the new rules.

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The Denver Post

## Snowmobile ban set for '03 at 2 parks

By [E. Lynn Spain](#)  
Denver Post Environment Writer

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**Nov. 23, 2000** - Thousands of snowmobiles will disappear from Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks by 2003 to protect wildlife and beauty, the U.S. Park Service announced Wednesday.

Conservation groups hailed the decision, but neither snowmobilers nor the animal-rights group that forced the Park Service's hand is happy about it. Sen. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo., is already proposing legislation to delay the ban. And at least one off-road-vehicle advocate is considering a federal court challenge.

The ban was announced Wednesday by Karen Wade, Intermountain Region director for the Park Service, following years of study.

After the snowmobile ban is in place, winter tourists will be restricted to multi-passenger snow coaches, snowshoes or skis. New snowmobile restrictions will be phased in next winter as the park ramps up to coach service. No changes are planned for this winter.

Park officials said the decision struck a compromise between resource protection and winter tourism.

"Unfortunately, snowmobiles have been shown to harm wildlife, air quality and the natural quiet of these parks," said Wade.

But critics were already reviewing their options.

Thomas, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, has proposed a legislative rider that would delay the administration's ban and, in a related matter, give snowmobile makers three years to meet emissions standards developed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"This is the wrong course and another example of the Clinton administration's failure to lead, by ignoring reasonable solutions," said Thomas.

Adena Cook, public lands director for the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a motorized-recreation advocacy group that claims 600,000 members, said that the ban, by some estimates, will cost neighboring communities such as West Yellowstone 1,000 jobs and \$100 million a year in tourism.

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A snowmobile ban at Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks would remove a huge draw that sets northern Wyoming apart from other snowmobile meccas such as Colorado and even Minnesota, she said.

Cook said snowmobile groups are considering a court challenge. "Not only is the decision not acceptable to us, we believe the process itself was flawed," she added.

But Mike Clark, executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, said the decision means the park will finally be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act for the first time in 20 years.

Bob Ekey, The Wilderness Society's northern Rockies director, said the ban doesn't have to mean hardship for park neighbors.

Ekey suggested that the Park Service can award snow-coach concessions to neighboring towns and aggressively market Yellowstone and the Tetons, as it did after the 1988 fire season. Clark added that more than 400 miles of trails will remain open outside of park borders.

But Clark fears that a lame duck Congress will hamstring the Park Service's ruling.

"We hope they don't, because we know the science is on our side, the law is on our side, and the American public is on our side," said Clark.

Fund for the Animals, the group that filed a lawsuit which forced the Park Service to do the study, said the decision didn't go far enough. The group is concerned that bison will continue to use snow-packed roads to leave the park, where they would be killed because of fears they would spread disease to cattle.

*Denver Post staff writer Mike Soraghan contributed to this report.*

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# Plan Unveiled to Restore Yosemite to Natural State

■ **Recreation:** Babbitt hails 10-year blueprint, says it protects park's beauty while enhancing visitors' experience. Leaders of the largest environmental groups show their support.

By JAMES RAINEY, TIMES STAFF WRITER

**YOSEMITE VILLAGE**—Mother Nature began the process nearly four years ago—sending down a flood that washed hundreds of campgrounds, dozens of hotel rooms and acres of asphalt from the floor of Yosemite Valley.

In a snowy meadow beside the Merced River on Tuesday, National Park Service officials pledged to continue nature's efforts—with a sweeping, 10-year plan to restore meadows and riverbanks and to push back mankind's sometimes overbearing footprint in the heart of Yosemite National Park.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt introduced the \$442-million Yosemite Valley Plan, saying it will finally create the political will to achieve the nearly three-decade-old goal of "restoring Yosemite's breathtaking beauty and providing balance."

"The plan will conserve the natural and cultural resources of Yosemite National Park," Babbitt said, "while providing easy access and improving the quality of our visitor experience."

The plan reduces the number of day parking spaces in the Valley by more than two-thirds and encourages visitors to park in one of three lots that will be a half-hour drive or more away from prime views of breathtaking Bridalveil Falls and the towering granite monolith, El Capitan. The voluminous blueprint also calls for the removal of more than 400 tent cabins and pushes almost all development at least 150 feet away from the Merced River. Nearly half of the park workers who now live in the narrow valley will be relocated to new housing elsewhere.

The interior secretary and Park Service officials predicted that the proposal will succeed where others have failed because it has a wide support in the environmental community and substantial funding already set aside. The cost of the work has grown, however, by more than \$100 million since a March draft proposal.



Associated Press

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt speaks at Yosemite on Tuesday.

But every meadow, creek and vista in the 7-mile-long, mile-wide valley has its own constituency. And as the 35 protesters clamoring behind Babbitt with placards made clear, the fight over the evolution of the valley will continue.

At least half a dozen leaders of the nation's largest and most prestigious environmental groups stood shoulder to shoulder with Babbitt to endorse the proposal. In the background, the sound of ice falls rumbled against the valley's sheer granite walls.

Jay Watson, regional director of the WIP  
Please see **YOSEMITE, A9**

# YOSEMITE

Continued from A8

demess Society, said the 1997 flood had presented the Park Service with a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform into reality what had historically been a majestic yet elusive vision for Yosemite Valley."

"The central question was whether the Park Service was up to the task," Watson added. "The Yosemite Valley Plan answers that question with a resounding yes."

Also praising the plan were the American Alpine Club, which lauded in particular the preservation of Camp 4, one of the world's great havens for climbers and mountaineers; the Yosemite Restoration Trust, which cheered the elimination of earlier plans to build a massive parking lot near El Capitan; and the Natural Resources Defense Council, which lauded the restoration of riverbanks and meadows.

Babbitt said the broad alliance will help the Park Service win the more than \$262 million in capital funding still needed to make the proposal a reality.

Many projects should be able to begin without much delay, however, because of the \$105 million already appropriated by Congress for flood repairs and restoration. That money can be used on projects scheduled for completion in the next two to four years, including: improving campgrounds and ending with a total of 500 sites, 25 more than present but short of the 549 before the flood; eliminating Cascades Dam to restore the natural flow of the Merced River; recreating meadows and forest where Upper and Lower River campgrounds were washed away; modernizing shuttle buses and maintenance facilities; and replacing more than 100 motel units at Yosemite Lodge with rustic cabins, more in keeping with the site's history.

In addition, the private, non-profit Yosemite Fund has committed to raise \$12.5 million to demolish an asphalt parking lot at the base of Yosemite Falls. The organization has also pledged to install wheelchair ramps and erect interpretive displays.

But the costs will be ongoing. The expansion of bus and shuttle service alone will hike the park's operating budget by at least \$7 million a year.



Associated Press

Protesters opposed to federal plan voice concerns in Yosemite.

Despite the consensus, however, others are waiting to scuttle the plan.

The protesters who assembled behind Babbitt Tuesday said the plan allows too much new development, like new cabins. They waved signs that read: "Stop the NP's Profit Machine" and "John Muir Would Be Crying." As Babbitt spoke the group unveiled a large banner quoting David Brower, the environmental elder statesman who died earlier this month. "Yosemite should be a nature center," Brower had said, "not a profit center."

Another constituency, meanwhile, worries that the federal government is imposing too many restrictions and limits on visitors.

Many business people in "gateway" communities around Yosemite said they fear that reducing overnight accommodations in the park and encouraging people to ride the bus will eliminate many of the family campers who have been their livelihood.

"We are all fighting it here," said Joyce Kling, a cook at the Grizzly Bear restaurant in the town of Coarsegold, outside the park. "The only people who it would help are the big hotels. But this town and all the other little towns won't get anything."

Rep. George Radanovich (R-Mariposa), who represents the

area, has said the Park Service paid too little attention to such sentiments.

Signaling that the path to funding the plan will not be an easy one, Radanovich has called for hearings into the "exceedingly costly" price tag. He has also proposed legislation that, in the future, would require a detailed economic impact analysis when Park Service plans affect a neighboring community.

Babbitt said the concept that tourist economies must suffer if cars are discouraged has been proven wrong. The Park Service last summer forced visitors to Utah's Zion National Park to leave their cars and ride a shuttle bus, Babbitt said. As many as 4,000 cars a day were eliminated from the majestic canyon at the heart of the park, he said.

Most visitors rode buses in from the gateway community of Springdale.

"The wildlife and the nature is returning there to the park. And it's quiet and people are loving it," Babbitt declared. "And people who live in Springdale say they love it too because those people are stopping there now and buying a souvenir."

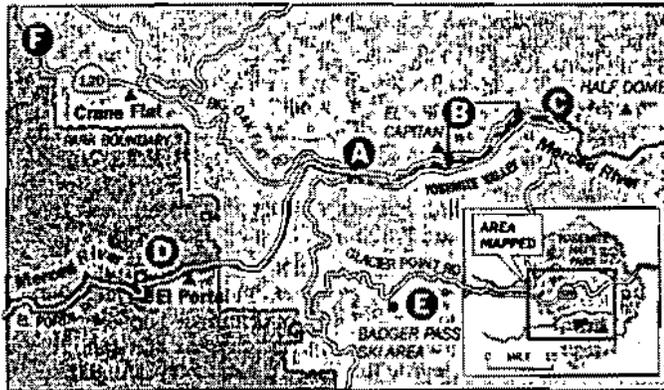
He pledged that Yosemite Valley will remain accessible, but with more consideration to the aesthetics that brought people here in the first place.

Los Angeles Times  
Date: 11/15/00  
Page: A8, A9.

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## Less Parking in the Valley

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on Tuesday released a plan for Yosemite National Park that would include limiting parking in Yosemite Valley and encouraging day visitors to take buses from designated locations outside the valley.



The plan would:

- A** Remove concrete and wood Cascades Dam to allow more natural flow of Merced River.
- B** Convert a 3.2-mile section of Northside Drive from automobile traffic to a pedestrian and bicycle path.
- C** Remove more than 1,000 parking spaces from Yosemite Valley
- D** Establish shuttlebus service from 370 parking spaces at El Portal
- E** Establish shuttlebus service from 400 parking spaces at Badger Pass
- F** Establish shuttlebus service from 720 parking spaces near Crane Flat

LESLIE CARLSON / Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times  
Date: 11-15-00  
Page: A8, A9

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# Park Service anticipates \$441 million cost

By Eric Brazil  
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

*'People who know and love Yosemite don't like the compromise.'*

**Bruce Babbitt**  
Secretary of the Interior

**YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK** — The National Park Service's final plan for Yosemite Valley is kinder to the common man and nature than its predecessors, but it will cost a great deal more to implement.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt arrived in the valley Tuesday morning to take the wraps off the plan, which has been a work in progress for two decades.

The Park Service calculates that the plan will require \$441.7 million in federal funding, almost \$100 million more than it estimated in March when it published a draft plan.

"We've been working on this for 30 years," Babbitt said. "People who know and love Yosemite don't like the compromise."

The proposal mainly provides a framework for restoring degraded areas within the Merced River corridor. It also aims to reduce summer gridlock and auto congestion.

While the draft plan was severely criticized by environmental groups, the final version has already won support from several groups that have been given an advance peek at it.

"At long last, the Park Service appears poised to protect Yosemite Valley's incomparable resources by reducing access to private cars, providing clean-fuel shuttles and buses, eliminating unnecessary development and restoring the Merced River," said Johanna Wald, land program director of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Critics zeroed in on the draft plan for its apparent preference for upper-end recreation, and the authors of the final plan clearly took criticism to heart.

Whereas the draft called for reducing the number of inexpensive tent and house-

keeping cabins and adding 40 rooms to Yosemite Lodge, the final plan raises the number of housekeeping cabins from 52 to 100 and tent cabins from 150 to 174. Campsites would be increased from 465 to 500.

On the other end of the scale, the Park Service concluded that the number of rooms proposed at Yosemite Lodge would drop from 386 to 251.

The final plan eliminates a parking site proposed for Taft Toe near El Capitan. Hazel Green, a privately owned parcel, would become the preferred out-of-valley parking location for the Big Oak Flat Road corridor.

Reducing vehicular congestion in the valley has been a primary goal of Park Service planners since the adoption of the General Management Plan in 1980. The final plan envisions 2,040 parking spaces for day visitors, but just 550 of them in the valley.

The plan envisions 400 parking spaces at Badger Pass, 370 at El Portal and 720 at Hazel Green, with visitors to be taken into the valley via shuttle buses.

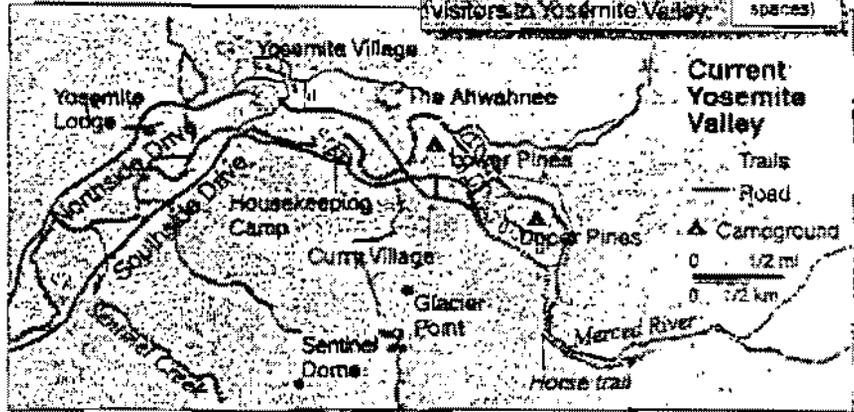
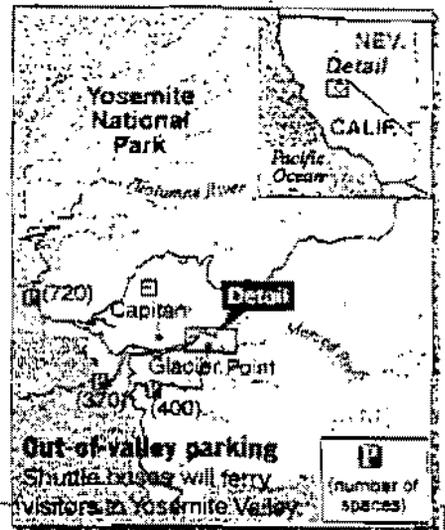
The Park Service is proposing to take a "phase approach" to removing some historic Merced River bridges.

The plan also calls for removing the park's stables and 12 associated outbuildings. But it retains the medical clinic in its present location.

Housing for hundreds of Park Service employees — and the superintendent's office as well — will be moved out of the park. Whereas

## Change ahead for Yosemite

Under a \$441 million plan that's been argued over for decades, the National Park Service will overhaul Yosemite National Park to help reduce the impact of previous development and the nearly 4 million visitors the park receives each year. The plan will be completed over two decades, with most changes happening within Yosemite Valley. Here are some highlights.



● Parking spaces reduced from 1,662 to 550. Shuttle service expanded. In the valley, lodging reduced from 1,260 rooms to 961, and employee housing reduced by 554 to 723.

● 3.2-mile section of Northside Drive replaced with paved foot and bike trail.

● 150-foot wide protection zone imposed along most of Merced River.

● 176 acres, including Ahwahnee meadow, restored to natural state by removing roads and some buildings.

● Campsites increased from 475 to 500 and redesigned to enhance natural features.

Source: Yosemite National Park

AP

there are now 1,277 employee beds in the park, there will be just 723 when the plan is implemented.

The Park Service has \$180.4 million on hand to implement the final valley plan. The balance of the \$441.7 million will require congressional action.

The Park Service hopes to start implementing the plan as early as January. The first two items will be the establishment of a parking area at Badger Pass, which may

open in the summer of 2002.

Simultaneously, the park is ordering several low-emission buses to build an out-of-valley shuttle-bus fleet. The plan is to replace the existing shuttle fleet with these clean-fuel burning vehicles.

To restore the wild and scenic Merced River, Cascades diversion dam will be removed in 2002, as will the Happy Isle Bridge. Friends of Yosemite Valley, a citi-

zens' environmental organization founded by the late conservation leader David Brower, contends that the plan's true aim is development and the enrichment of park concessionaire

Yosemite Park Concessions, noting that just a small amount of the funding sought is for land restoration. Under the Park Service's final plan, 176 acres that have been developed will be restored to their natural condition.



ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE  
Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt pauses on the trail to Lower Yosemite Falls after announcing the plan.



1  
Holding a sign in protest, Greg Adair, center, of Friends of Yosemite Valley says the federal plan announced Tuesday adds construction.



# NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2000

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2000 · USA TODAY

## \$441M set to cut Yosemite congestion

### Critics say plan doesn't go far enough

By John Ritter  
USA TODAY

**SAN FRANCISCO** — After two decades of fits and starts, a plan to curb pollution and congestion at Yosemite National Park and restore meadows and a wild river to their natural states finally move forward.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced Tuesday \$441 million in restoration projects and infrastructure changes aimed at curbing traffic in heavily used Yosemite Valley, putting more tourists on shuttle buses and ridding some of the park's signature attractions of their human footprint.

"Everyone agrees that the valley is cluttered and full of traffic and too many buildings," Babbitt said. "On a summer day, the essential Yosemite experience of beauty verging on poetry is very hard to find."

The plan seeks an elusive balance between conservation of fragile ecosystems and public access to a tourist destination that draws 4 million visitors a year. A goal is to cut the number of vehicles that enter the valley — more than 7,000 on summer weekend days — by 60%. Among the features:

- ▶ Two-thirds of the valley's



By MARY YORK/AP

Babbitt: "Everyone agrees that the valley is cluttered."

parking spaces will be eliminated, and new lots on the park's fringes will handle nearly 1,500 vehicles. An expanded shuttle service will take visitors through the valley.

- ▶ A quarter of the valley's hotel rooms will be removed, and the number of campsites increased slightly.

- ▶ Housing for more than 40% of Yosemite's employees will be torn down. They will be relocated outside the park.

- ▶ Nearly 200 acres, including sensitive meadows, will be restored by tearing out roads and buildings.

- ▶ A 3.2-mile section of a main road through the valley floor will be replaced by a paved foot and bike trail, and a commercial horseback stable and tennis courts will be razed.



By Frank Potroff, USA TODAY

- ▶ A dam, one bridge and possibly a second, would be taken out to help the Merced River regain its natural flow. Almost all development would be moved outside a 150-foot-wide zone protecting the river.

Delayed for years by lawsuits and inaction, the Yosemite plan has the support of many environmental groups, including the Wilderness Society, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Parks Conservation Association.

"We think it's going to be grand for the park" says Jay Watson, Wilderness Society regional director for California and Nevada.

Watson says that when a flood destroyed campgrounds and lodging in January 1997,

many environmentalists worried that the Park Service would miss an opportunity to press ahead with a vision that had languished for years. "This plan answers those worries,"

he says. But critics, the Sierra Club among them, say the plan is top-heavy with construction of roads, parking lots and hotel rooms and doesn't go far enough to restore areas of the park that have suffered from traffic and overuse.

Critics also say changes in the mix of accommodations away from less expensive campsites and rustic cabins toward pricier rooms will make it harder for tourists of modest means to stay overnight.

"This is a development plan, not a preservation plan," says Greg Adair, director of Friends of Yosemite Valley. "The secretary should know what real protection is all about, and he's done nothing but run the other way."

Adair's group twice has taken the Park Service to court over its management of the Merced River, which runs through the valley and is protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Adair says a lawsuit against the new plan is likely.

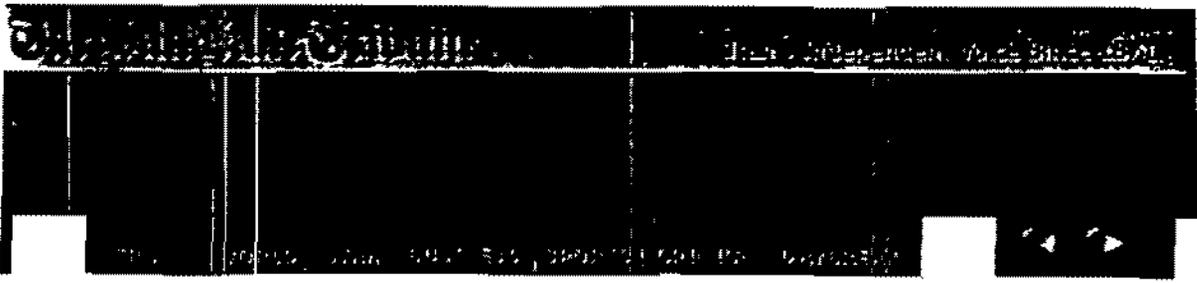
Joyce Eden, a member of the Sierra Club's Yosemite committee, says: "The plan is rife with things characterized as restoration that are not restoration. They're moving the impact from one area of Yosemite to another and creating additional degradation to the park."

Before he died Nov. 6, David Brower, the Sierra Club's first director and one of America's most influential conservationists, lambasted the Park Service's plan. He saw it as "converting this temple into a profit center, with pricey hotels, scant camping, few modest accommodations (and) wider roads to field bigger diesel buses."

But most environmentalists say the plan is a solid, if not perfect, start.

Johanna Wald, director of the land program for the Natural Resources Defense Council, says a lot of the restoration is comparatively inexpensive and a lot of the development critics complain about will help "undo the damaging effects of past buildings."

"It's an effort at long last to make the visitor experience one that doesn't involve sitting in long lines of traffic, that doesn't involve looking at Yosemite's treasures out of the window of a car and that doesn't involve the kind of lodging you get at any typical motel on the outside," Wald says.



## Grand Canyon Dedicates Rail Center

Friday, October 27, 2000

BY JOEL ESKOVITZ  
THE ASSOCIATED  
PRESS

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz. -- It's difficult to associate the vast and peaceful expanses of the Grand Canyon with traffic congestion and frustration.

But with an average of 4,200 visitors an hour during peak seasons and only about 2,000 parking spaces inside the park, the roads themselves have become parking lots.

On Thursday, the park took its first step toward reducing the problem with the dedication of the Canyon View Information Plaza, which will become a hub for a planned light rail system to carry visitors inside the park. It will be the first public transportation system ever created in a national park and will one day virtually eliminate the need for cars here.

"It represents . . . a vision which says we are going to restore the encounter with God's creation," Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said at the dedication ceremony.

The plaza is the cornerstone of the park's 1995 General Management Plan, which has been heralded as an innovative way to deal with problems such as overcrowding and environmental damage.

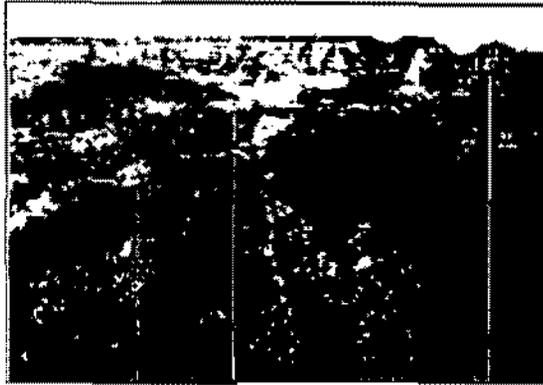
The light rail system is expected to debut in early 2004, taking visitors into the park from the nearby town of Tusayan, where there will be a 3,500-space parking lot.

Passengers will take an 8 1/2-minute ride to the visitor's center at a rate of 4,200 people per hour. There will be another station within Grand Canyon Village.

The National Park Service will award a contract next spring to design, build, operate and maintain the light rail system.

The plaza provides the first unobstructed view of the Canyon from the South Rim, which is only 1,000 feet away.

It also serves as an orientation center and a staging area for hiking the Greenway trail, bicycling in the park and is a stop for a park shuttle that began running Thursday.



Visitors line the edges of Mather Point at the Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, on Thursday. (Matt York/The Associated Press)



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About 5 million people enter the park each year, creating heavy congestion on roads, especially during the summer. On a typical summer day, there are roughly three cars for every one parking space available within the park, leading to hassles and headaches for tourists; in 1996, there was a knife fight over a parking spot.

The \$26 million Canyon View Information Plaza replaces a 43-year-old visitor center that closed Thursday. It was largely paid for with money generated by recreation fees.

Carl Bowman, who has been the park's air quality specialist for the past nine years, said that while there is no quantitative data, the shift to a transit system will definitely reduce pollution in the park because there will be fewer cars.

Still unknown, he said, are the impacts light rail will have on traffic patterns and road dust. No one has determined if dust from trains will be higher than that generated by cars.

"It's a really major first step in terms of getting from the system we had in the 20th Century where people and their cars were accommodated in the park to move beyond that to accommodate more people," he said. "So often we hear different groups talking about how there's just not enough room. What it is there is not enough room for the cars."

4 >  
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## Making a quieter Canyon

### New buildings set back from rim

By Mark Shaffer

The Arizona Republic

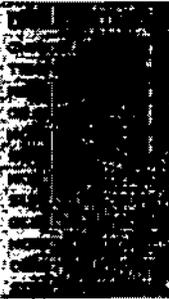
Oct. 26, 2000

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GRAND CANYON - A moment of silence would be fitting today when Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt cuts a ribbon to open Grand Canyon National Park's new visitors center and transportation hub near Mather Point.

That's because this is the beginning of the National Park Service's most elaborate effort to bring back natural quiet to its crown-jewel park through a three-pronged approach of light-rail trains, alternative-fuel shuttle buses and rim trails for hiking and biking.

If everything goes as scheduled, almost all of the nearly 1.5 million cars that annually clog park roads and parking lots will be removed by 2004. The immediate goal is to start dispersing the crowds and traffic that flock into Grand Canyon Village.

Nearly 40 miles of public transportation will stretch across the South Rim: from Desert View in the east to Hermits Rest in the west, to the community of Tusayan south of the park. Some shuttle buses have run limited routes along the South Rim since 1974. A larger shuttle system and the light-rail train are set to be in place within four years.

"This is all about respect for one of the Earth's most amazing libraries," said Dave Simon, Southwest regional director of the National Parks and Conservation Association. "They've finally made decisions about limits and the quality of the visitor experience. We will finally get to see what a special place this is."

For now, park visitors won't see any drastic changes. They will still pay a \$20-per-car entrance fee and are free to park at other overlooks, except for Mather Point, the first view of the Canyon for motorists arriving from the south. That area, which once had 150 parking spaces, will be used for the visitors center and public transportation.

Visitors to the Grand Canyon will be directed to park near the new Canyon View Information Plaza near Mather Point, about 1 1/2 miles east of the old visitors center. From the plaza, they can connect to shuttle buses to Grand Canyon Village and West Rim stops, the beginning of the South Kaibab

Trail and to Yaqui Point.

That's only the beginning, said Brad Traver, a park planner.

The Park Service is expected to receive a permit from the U.S. Forest Service within a week to build a 2,800-vehicle parking lot on 105 acres just outside the park on the north side of Tusayan. That will be the starting point for a more than \$100 million light-rail system, which will transport as many as 4,200 people an hour into the park.

Access to the light-rail system has been one of the central issues surrounding Canyon Forest Village, a proposed development near the light-rail terminal outside the park. Proposition 400, which will be considered by Coconino County voters Nov. 7, is a referendum of the zoning for Canyon Forest Village, approved earlier this year by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors.

However, Traver said regardless of which way the vote goes on Canyon Forest Village, the light-rail project will proceed.

In addition, more than 35 miles of trails for hikers, bikers and, in some areas, horseback riders, will be built during the next decade. Currently, the South Rim has a 4-mile trail in the Grand Canyon Village area, and two more miles will be constructed soon between Yavapai and Mather points.

"Our main point here is to reduce the drone of vehicles," Traver said. "When you stand on the Canyon rim, you should be able to clearly hear the caw of ravens. That hasn't been the case in many places."

The new transportation plans at the Grand Canyon could become a model for large-scale, integrated public transportation systems at other federal parks.

Results have been encouraging for smaller mass-transit systems elsewhere.

They've been so successful in cutting noise at Zion National Park in Utah that mountain lions have returned to the main valley. Whales appear to be coming closer to shore at Acadia National Park in Maine, and wolves and caribou line the roadway in Denali National Park in Alaska.

"Our shuttle bus system has even changed the behavior of tourists coming to Zion," said Tom Haraden, acting chief naturalist. "They get off at one stop, go hiking, come back and go hiking at another stop, and make a day of it. The town just outside the park boundary, Springdale, has a lot more business at night now because the tourists are getting back so late."

Despite predictions that Zion's visitation would drop because of the new shuttle system, operated in the park's main valley during the summer, Haraden said visitation is up nearly 100,000 this year, to more than 2 million.

At Acadia, on the Atlantic coast in Maine, the use of propane shuttle buses has dramatically cut the number of vehicles within the park and been highly praised by kayakers and whale watchers, said Len Bobinchock, assistant superintendent.

"We've also seen a distinct trend of people not even driving up here any

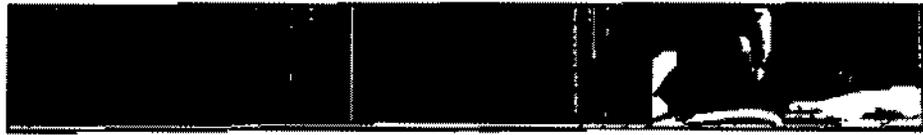
more," Bobinchock said. "About 25 percent of our visitors now are coming here by some way other than car, and that was only 2 percent a few years back."

Along the Alaskan Highway, wildlife is seldom seen by tourists, said Elaine Sevy, a spokeswoman for the Park Service. But within Denali, where the Park Service converted old school buses into a transit system, drivers have to watch closely because so many species gather near the roadways because of the lack of traffic.

No one expects much of any effect on wildlife in the Grand Canyon area because of the changes.

"But the tension will decrease for them just like it will for humans," Sevy said, "and the transit system at the Grand Canyon is going to set the stage for what will follow in many more parks."

Reach the reporter at [mark.shaffer@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:mark.shaffer@arizonarepublic.com) or (602) 444-8057.



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# Officials recommend snowmobile ban for Yellowstone by 2003

By Traci Watson  
USA TODAY

Federal officials recommended on Tuesday banning the 70,000 snowmobiles that rumble through Yellowstone National Park every winter. The move delighted environmentalists but dismayed enthusiasts of the sport and local communities that depend on snowmobilers for winter income.

Observers say the National Park Service is likely to follow the recommendation when it makes a decision in November. Without snowmobiles, winter tourists could see the park on snowshoes or cross-country skis. Or they could ride in snow coaches, van-like vehicles that carry 10 or more people.

The ban wouldn't take effect until the winter of 2003-04, to give time for snowmobile-rental companies to switch over to snow coaches. The larger vehicles would have to meet emission and noise standards yet to be specified.

Park service officials say snowmobiles spread noise and air pollution, startle animals and create a safety hazard. "By having fewer vehicles in the park and ... more trained drivers, you'll have fewer problems," Yellowstone spokeswoman Marsha Karle said.

Exhaust from snowmobiles was so thick at a Yellowstone entrance station several years ago that park

employees were suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. In Yellowstone's 1998-99 season, snowmobiles brought in 63,000 tourists.

Environmentalists said the recommendation was long overdue.

"People wanting continued snowmobiling are saying this (plan) is extreme," said Jon Cannon of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. "To our view, what's extreme is a park with dirty air, stressed wildlife and disappointed visitors."

The park's neighbors, who rely on snowmobilers for winter income, fear for the future of their businesses and communities. In West Yellowstone, Mont., for example, 28-30% of resort tax revenue is collected in the winter.

Before snowmobiling, "We had many families who just summered here and left" in the winter, said Marysue Costello of the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce. With a ban, "What happens to the fiber of our community?"

A snow-coach tour could never replace the freedom of riding a snowmobile, said Christine Jourdain of the American Council of Snowmobile Associations. And snowmobiles could meet any noise and pollution standards, she said.

The Park Service and others say snowmobile makers have failed to develop quiet, clean vehicles. But riders and manufacturers say they're already on the market.

# America's next generation of national parks

*New proposals reflect a desire to commemorate less-pristine landscapes, as well as recognize overlooked and ignoble moments of history.*

by Todd Wilkinson

Special to The Christian Science Monitor

**YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, WYO.** - They are the modern offspring of an American idea born in the middle of the 19th century.

They include a 200-mile strip of Iowa tall-grass prairie fronting the Missouri River, and the boyhood home of an African-American scholar who fought for civil rights but fled the country in self-imposed exile.

Some are sites of cultural shame, such as World War II internment camps for Japanese Americans. Others are places of natural wonder, like the ocean bay near Puerto Rico that literally sparkles at night with millions of glow-in-the-dark sea creatures.

They are the candidates for the next generation of national parks, preserves, and battlefields - suggestions that not long ago might have seemed unlikely.

From Yellowstone to Gettysburg, most of America's signature landscapes and historic sites have been protected. Now, attention is turning to sites of more-subtle beauty, overlooked importance, and even dubious distinction. As America grows and becomes more diverse, the candidates are, in many ways, a reflection of the nation's changing sense of itself.

"The idea of what a national park is continues to evolve and grow just as this country continues to evolve and grow," says Destry Jarvis, a senior policy adviser at the Department of the Interior. "Each generation has its own values and its own sense of what it regards as important."

The federal park system currently encompasses 379 nature preserves, battlefields, urban parks, and buildings. How it evolves in the future is outlined by two competing perspectives.

One view, which holds sway in the Republican Congress, is that the park system has become unwieldy, too expensive to maintain, and unnecessarily expands federal property holdings.

The countervailing argument was expressed by the late Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Wallace Stegner, who wrote that an expanding park system was the best idea America ever had.

For supporters of this viewpoint, now is the time to act. "We as a country have the best opportunity to expand the park system since the late 1970s," says Ron Tipton, a senior vice president of the National Parks Conservation Association.

He notes that Congress has plenty of money. The Land and Water Conservation Fund generates hundreds of millions of dollars annually through royalties collected on off-shore oil drilling. Moreover, budget forecasts are positive.

But last week, the movement for new parks suffered a setback when the US Senate voted to scale back a proposed 15-year, \$45 billion funding package that included money for parks. The plan was defeated primarily by senators from the West, who claimed the amount of federal land ownership is too large.

Says Will Hart, spokesman for Sen. Larry Craig (R) of Idaho: "In a state like Idaho, where 63 percent of the land is federally owned, [the senator] has concern over any private land going into federal ownership."

In response to such criticisms, many of the new parks being proposed involve innovative attempts to mix government and private involvement. And no better example exists, perhaps, than in Iowa.

As early as the 1930s, the Park Service identified the once-ubiquitous tall-grass prairie as a landscape worth protecting.

"Unfortunately, it took us 60 years to get around to protecting any of it," says Mr. Tipton. While he laments the delay, Tipton says it has forced society to be more creative in finding ways to set up parks.

Rather than having the federal government simply acquire a large piece of land, a new Iowa preserve would marry the management expertise of the park service with private rural landowners. In fact, citizens, farmers, and members of the business community have

asked that the geologically spectacular Loess Hills be added to the park system. That eagerness is important.

"There is a very strong land ethic in the heartland because people realize how important good stewardship is," says Patty Beneke, a native Iowan and former assistant secretary of the Interior.

"Loess Hills will be a focal point not only for people in the Midwest but across the country," she adds. "In a state like this, where most of the land is privately owned, we intend to show how a new unit of the park system will benefit everyone."

The new park candidates also represent a departure from the old desire to safeguard only relatively untouched lands to the modern push to protect the best of what's left.

That's true in the Sonoran Desert, and it means rescuing landscapes that may not be pristine, but in the future will be valuable to an urban nation in need of quiet reflection.

"When Shenandoah [in Virginia] and Redwood [in California] national parks were added to the system,

one could argue that portions were devastated resources," Mr. Jarvis says, referring to decades of logging and agricultural fragmentation. But today, the benefits of aggressive restoration are obvious, he adds.

Similarly, historical sites - from "Rosie the Riveter" World War II factories to the Erie Canal - are being threatened by construction, sprawl, and basic wear and tear.

"We're always making history," Jarvis says. "But with each step forward we take, there is the continuous need to remember our past and to learn from it. National parks are a way to call attention to our unique, yet common heritage."

"In my judgment, the problem isn't too many people visiting Yosemite. The problem is too many damn cars. We need to invite visitors away from their automobiles."

— Bruce Babbitt, interior secretary



PHOTOS BY ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, at the podium, announces the government's final plan Tuesday to restore 176 acres of Yosemite Valley.

# Unpaving paradise to rebuild Yosemite

Many parking lots will be moved to outside the valley in new plan.

BY MARK GROSSI  
THE FRESNO BEE

YOSEMITE — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt announced a plan Tuesday to unpave parts of paradise and put up parking lots outside Yosemite Valley.

In the process, the federal government will build some rustic cabins, restore 176 acres and move 554 employees out of the valley in a balancing act to accommodate nature and 3.7 million annual visitors.

One more thing: This Yosemite Valley Plan will cost \$441 million, not \$343 million, as officials first thought.

"In my judgment, the problem isn't too many people visiting Yosemite," said Babbitt in an-

nouncing the final plan, which took 29 years of argument, analysis and compromise to complete. "The problem is too many damn cars. We need to invite visitors away from their automobiles."

As many as 1,000 of the valley's 1,662 parking places would disappear, replaced by a 550-car parking area in the valley and three parking sites outside the valley with spaces adding up to 2,040. Park officials hope to have some out-of-valley parking started in 2002.

Babbitt and others were celebrating the completion of the \$441 million plan in front of about 350 people near Yosemite Lodge with Half Dome as a backdrop, dusted with snow and crystal. Please see **YOSEMITE**, Page A18

The Fresno Bee  
Date: 11/15/00  
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11/3

# Yosemite: Parking, rooms to be reduced

Continued from Page A1  
tal clear on a crisp autumn morning.

Officials also were unveiling changes in the plan after hearing 10,200 comments this year on the preliminary proposal. The biggest change was the increase in cost.

National Park Service officials explained that not all the projects in the 10- to 15-year plan were included in the first proposal. They added that they underestimated the actual cost of the projects because Yosemite is far from major cities, making it an expensive place for contractors.

Yosemite Superintendent David Mihalic defended the cost, saying a large chunk of the money will go for moving employees out of the valley.

"More than \$180 million is for housing outside the valley," Mihalic said. "It's a difficult pill for employees to swallow, but it has to be done."

Environmental opponents, who stood quietly holding signs saying "Stop the greed" and "John Muir would be crying," said they saw virtually no change between the final plan and the earlier one — except for the escalating cost.

"They've really added construction," said Greg Adair, representing of Friends of Yosemite Valley. "We can see this plan inflating already."

They circulated a statement from environmental icon David Brower, who died this month at 88. Brower had opposed the park service's plan.

"I don't see much restoration in the plan that isn't undone by destruction elsewhere," he wrote in July.

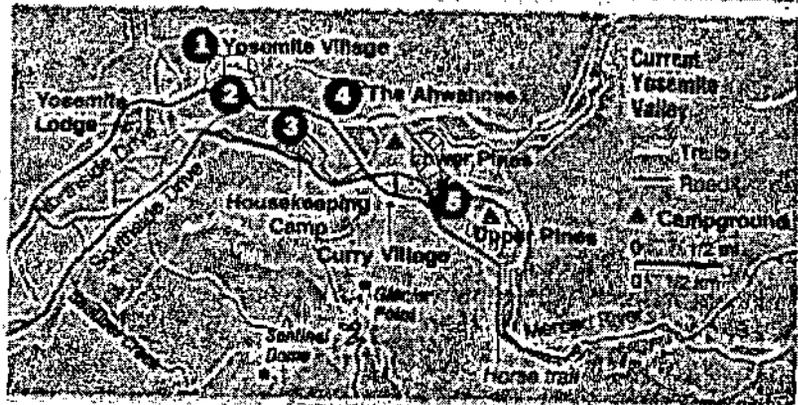
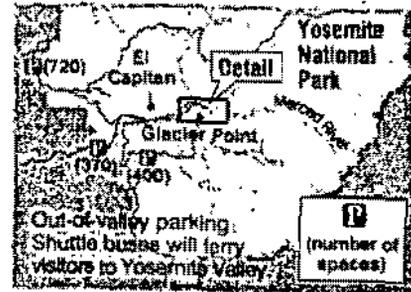
Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, whose district includes Yosemite Valley, criticized the plan Tuesday, promising to conduct hearings at National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee in Congress.

"This plan will result in unfair, limited public access to the park by the people who pay for its upkeep: the American taxpayer," he said.

But many other environmental and conservation groups did not

## Change ahead for Yosemite

Under a \$441 million plan that has been debated for decades, the National Park Service will overhaul Yosemite National Park to help reduce the impact of previous development and the 3.7 million visitors to the park each year. The plan will be completed over 10 to 15 years, with most changes happening within Yosemite Valley. Here are some highlights.



- 1 Parking spaces reduced from 1,682 to 550. Shuttle service expanded. In the valley, lodging reduced from 1,260 rooms to 961, and employee housing reduced by 554 to 723.
- 2 3.2-mile section of Northside Drive replaced with paved foot and bike trail.
- 3 150-foot wide-protection zone imposed along most of Merced River.
- 4 176 acres, including Ahwahnee meadow, restored to natural state by removing roads and some buildings.
- 5 Campsites increased from 475 to 500 and redesigned to enhance natural features.

Source: Yosemite National Park

ASSOCIATED PRESS

agree with Radanovich or the environmental opponents. The Wilderness Society and the American Alpine Club stepped up Tuesday and supported federal officials.

"We stand squarely in your corner," said Linda McMillan, vice president of the Alpine Club, which three years ago sued the park over plans to rebuild Yosemite Lodge. "We have come a very long way in a relatively short time in our relationship with the National Park Service."

The Alpine Club, for instance, agrees with the park service's push for more rustic accommodations in the park. No new motel units will be built, officials said. Instead, five cottages and 11 cabins will be built, more accurately

reflecting an outdoor setting than motel rooms.

Jay Watson of the Wilderness Society applauded the park service's effort: "Was the park service up to this task? That question has been answered with a resounding 'yes.'"

But Babbitt acknowledged the real work has not begun. He said Yosemite's "cantankerous, irrational, quarrelsome" devotees have helped in shaping the plan, and he does not expect them to go away.

"We have a long way to go," he said. "I know we can count on your fierce, uncompromising efforts in oversight of this plan as it is implemented."

► The reporter can be reached at [mgrossi@fresnobee.com](mailto:mgrossi@fresnobee.com) or 441-6316.



ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt pauses on the trail to Lower Yosemite Falls after announcing the plan.



Holding a sign in protest, Greg Adair, center, of Friends of Yosemite Valley says the federal plan announced Tuesday adds construction.

3/2

# Turning Back The Clock in Yosemite

Babbitt details final plan  
to mitigate development

By Glen Martin  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

YOSEMITE VALLEY — Surrounded by Sierra peaks mantled by a fresh snowfall, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt yesterday announced the final management plan for Yosemite National Park, capping an often acrimonious debate that has lasted 30 years.

The plan Babbitt unveiled promises to reshape Yosemite Valley dramatically in the coming years, greatly reducing the development "footprint" in the stunning Sierra Shangri-la.

Some of the most profound changes in the park will be felt by visitors used to driving in for a quick look at some of the world's most spectacular mountain scenery. In the new scheme, tourists will no longer be able to park at the base of Yosemite Falls, and many people will be obligated to take shuttle buses for a close look at Half Dome or El Capitan.

The final version of the plan contained few surprises, and most of the details were the same as in a previous draft released earlier this year. But it did include some minor changes made to address objections from environmental groups.

For example, the new version calls for reducing the number of overnight guest rooms in the valley from the current 1,260 to 961. In the early draft, the goal was to reduce

► ENVIRONMENT: Page A6 Col. 1

# Pact Ends 30 Years of Debate Over Management of Yosemite Park

## ► ENVIRONMENT

From Page 1

lodging to 981 rooms.

Yesterday's announcement followed scores of public meetings; tens of thousands of formal comments from interested parties and splenetic bickering between opposing sides.

Babbitt acknowledged as much in his comments, noting that efforts to develop a plan for the park began in the early 1970s.

"You are cantankerous, irascible, quarrelsome and passionate people," he said, "and that's because of your attraction to this place. I can't escape John Muir when I'm up here. Everyone is quoting him like he has just gone out for a beer and will be right back."

The plan will move most parking outside the valley, increase public transportation, reduce employee housing and lodging and emphasize preservation of the Merced River corridor.

It will take 10 to 15 years for all the changes to be made.

Several conservation groups enthusiastically endorsed the plan, but some environmentalists condemned it, claiming it favored the development of expensive hotel rooms over campsites and didn't go far enough in excluding cars from the valley.

About 30 protesters were on hand for Babbitt's announcement, although they were cordoned off from the event by National Park Service rangers.

Babbitt said he was sometimes frustrated by the momentous task of trying to achieve a consensus about Yosemite's future.

"There have been times in this

process when I have not had warm feelings for some of the environmental organizations," Babbitt said, "but they have had important things to say, and we have made changes in response."

Jay Watson, the western regional director for the Wilderness Society, said the 1997 flood that destroyed much of the park's infrastructure presented park planners with a tremendous opportunity. Earlier efforts to restore the park, including one major plan released in 1980, never got past the bickering stage.

Watson said the flood helped all sides focus on the need to move past gridlock.

"It gave us an historic opportunity to transform into reality what had long been an elusive vision for Yosemite," Watson said, "and I asked at that time if the National Park Service was up to the task. ... With

the release of this report, the answer is a resounding yes."

The Sierra Club also praised the plan. While it does not address all of the group's concerns, club officials said it contains significant improvements over a draft released last year.

"The Park Service listened to public outcry and responded," said Carl Pope, the Sierra Club's executive director. "The new plan protects fragile areas of Yosemite Valley, while reducing unnecessary development and traffic."

The final document and its various appendixes fill a medium-sized cardboard box. Major points include plans to:

- Move most of the valley's 1,662 parking spaces to outlying sites at Badger Pass and El Portal, with an additional site at either Hazel Green or Foresta. A lot containing about

550 spaces would be built at a redesigned visitor's center in the valley, which would also serve as a hub for public transportation.

- Remove most employee housing from the valley.

- Reduce the valley's available lodgings from 1,260 units to 961.

- Increase the number of shuttle buses serving the valley, ultimately shifting from diesel buses to cleaner vehicles using propane or electric hybrid technology.

- Remove an environmentally damaging dam on the Merced River.

- Increase campsites from 475 to 500. The pre-flood figure for campsites was 800.

- Restore several former campgrounds to natural conditions.

- Reduce the scope of Yosemite Village's concession services.

Yosemite Park Superintendent David Milhalic, a Babbitt appointee widely credited with ram-rodging the final plan through the bottleneck of public debate, said the document is not perfect, but that it could well serve as a template for managing the entirety of the Sierra Nevada.

"I just hope we don't let 'perfect' become the enemy of 'better,'" he said. "This is a different, better plan than the (earlier) draft plan. We hope to apply it beyond the valley to all 750,000 acres of the park — and (eventually) to the greater context of the Sierra as a whole."

Opponents to the plan said it doesn't do enough to stem development in the park.

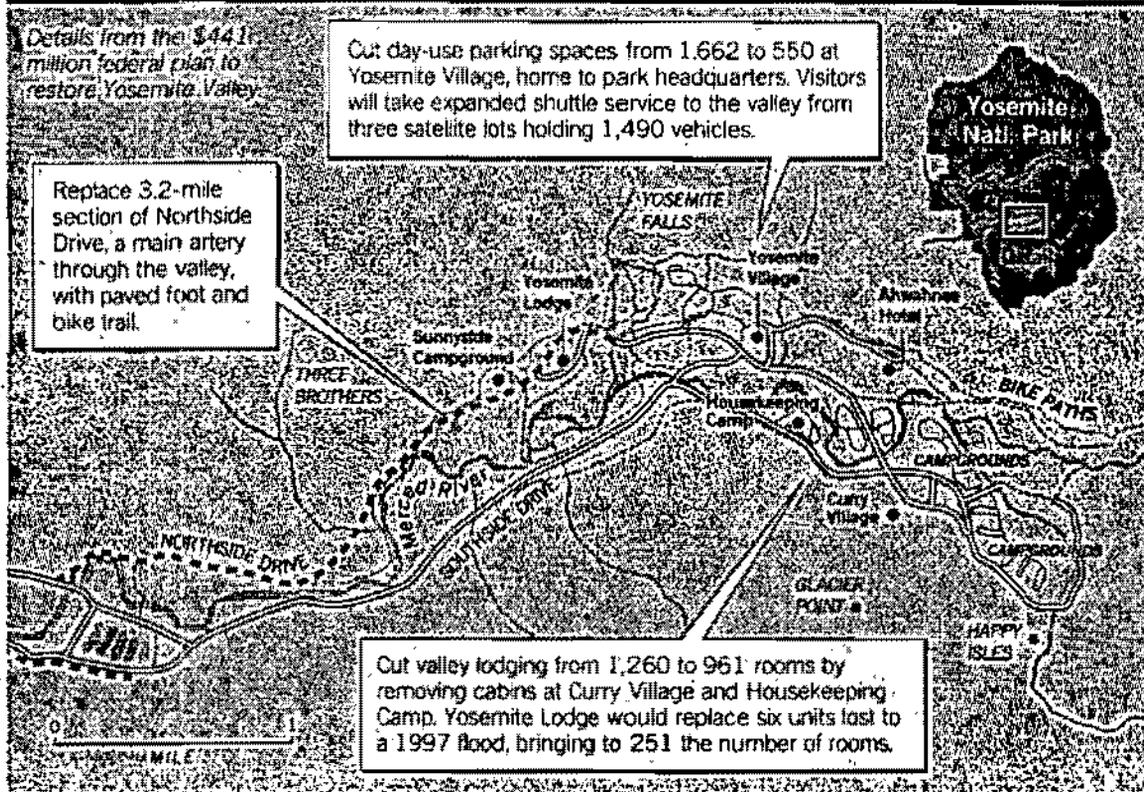
E-mail Glen Martin at  
gmartin@schronicle.com.

# CHANGES AT YOSEMITE

Details from the \$441 million federal plan to restore Yosemite Valley

Cut day-use parking spaces from 1,662 to 550 at Yosemite Village, home to park headquarters. Visitors will take expanded shuttle service to the valley from three satellite lots holding 1,490 vehicles.

Replace 3.2-mile section of Northside Drive, a main artery through the valley, with paved foot and bike trail.



Cut valley lodging from 1,260 to 961 rooms by removing cabins at Curry Village and Housekeeping Camp. Yosemite Lodge would replace six units lost to a 1997 flood, bringing to 251 the number of rooms.

**Other changes**

- Restore 176 acres to natural state by removing roads and buildings.
- Increase number of campsites from 475 to 500.
- Eliminate commercial horse stable and guided rides from valley.

- Cut employee housing from 1,277 beds in the valley to 723. Housing outside the valley will be increased from 414 to 1,361 beds.
- Remove dam and at least one bridge to reduce erosion along Merced River. A 150-foot wide protection zone would be imposed along most of the river.

Source: Associated Press

Chronicle Graphic

## Editorials

# A plan for Yosemite

A workable policy, though much-criticized, should move ahead.

**A**fter 20 years of fits and starts, the master plan for Yosemite Valley is racing to completion. Not everyone is happy, but that's to be expected with so contentious an issue as the future of one of the nation's principal natural resources.

The heart of the controversy and conflict over Yosemite is an insoluble dilemma: It isn't possible to restore Yosemite to a pristine natural condition — and keep it there — while simultaneously allowing large-scale access by people, specifically including the American people whose park it is.

Given that, the National Park Service has arrived at a compromise — perhaps almost by default rather than by design — that is workable for the near future. It will need considerable attention to details, and considerable more scrutiny as it is implemented, but the plan addresses at least some of the major concerns.

■ A crucial element of the plan is to reduce employee housing in the valley from 1,277 beds to 723. That would be replaced by increasing housing outside the valley from 414 to 1,361 beds. Buses will be purchased to shuttle employees back and forth from job to home.

■ The number of day-use parking spaces — those most used by Fresno and Valley visitors — would be reduced from 1,662 to 550 at Yosemite Village. Three new satellite lots would accommodate 1,490 cars and visitors will take an expanded shuttle service to Yosemite Valley. The three new lots would be at Badger Pass (for Fresno visitors), Crane Flat (for visitors coming by way of Tioga Pass) and at Hazel Green, a planned resort complex just outside the park's boundaries (for visitors from Merced).

■ Lodging would be reduced from 1,260 to

961 rooms in Yosemite Valley by removing cabins at the Housekeeping Camp and Curry Village. Yosemite Lodge would be allowed to replace six units lost to a 1997 flood, bringing the number of rooms there to 251.

■ Campsites would increase from 475 to 500, a concession to critics of an earlier draft of the plan who said lower-income visitors would be priced out of Yosemite.

■ The 3.2-mile Northside Drive, which passes by Yosemite Falls and El Capitan, would be replaced with a paved foot and bike trail. The Southside Drive would become a two-way road.

■ The commercial horseback riding stable and guided rides will be eliminated. The tennis courts would be removed from the Ahwahnee Hotel.

■ Some 176 acres will be restored to their natural state, including south Ahwahnee and Stoneman meadows, by removing roads and some buildings. Some critics charge that's much too little; they're right, but it's a useful start.

**T**he plan is costly, at nearly a half-billion dollars. Critics in the neighboring communities are upset that their interests haven't been sufficiently considered. They're right, too; the Park Service sometimes runs roughshod over the little guys. But local economic concerns aren't — and shouldn't be — the driving force behind a park policy that is national in scope. Yosemite isn't the private preserve of the day-user from Fresno, or the mom-and-pop store in Fish Camp. It belongs to the entire American people, and in some sense, because of its surpassing majesty, it belongs to the people of the world.

This plan seeks a compromise between fundamentally contradictory purposes. For that reason alone it is necessarily imperfect. But it represents progress — so long as it is implemented with good sense and a close attention to the myriad concerns that surround Yosemite and its grandeur.



# NEWS SUMMARY

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Communications

PICK-UP IN ROOM 1063

MONDAY, JULY 3, 2000



## Babbitt: Tower destruction is act of creation

By ROBERT HOLT - *Times Staff Writer*



**TIMBERrrr ...** — Cannon fire will herald the death of the National Tower on Monday.

*Photo by Darryl Wheeler - Gettysburg Times*

Toppling the National Gettysburg Battlefield Tower with explosive charges will be more an act of creation than destruction, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Friday.

"The demolition of the Gettysburg tower is more an act of creation and restoration than destruction," Babbitt said in a statement issued to reporters.

Babbitt, who vowed in April 1999 to have the tower felled, will preside over a ceremonial countdown at 5 p.m. Monday near the

Meade equestrian statue.

As part of official activities along Hancock Avenue, Babbitt will give the command for men clad in Union and Confederate uniforms to fire a round of blank charges from two cannons. Controlled Demolition President Mark Loizeaux, who is doing the \$100,000 project for only salvage and national media rights, will then detonate explosives to bring the 307-foot structure down like a tree.

While it is not listed in a battlefield management plan approved by the National Park Service last November, destroying the tower is part of efforts to recreate an 1863 appearance of the landscape.

Many area residents and tourists who visit the battlefield oppose demolition of the tower, which the Park Service seized from Overview Limited Partnership by eminent domain condemnation. Along with the manner in which federal officials forced the tower out of business, there is also controversy about the loss of local tax revenues in excess of \$100,000.

But Babbitt said the tower demolition will allow the Park Service to "create a better future" for the national park where Union and Confederate troops clashed in July 1863.

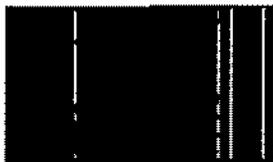
"Gettysburg should be protected as a sacred place in our nation's history, not treated as a tourist trap. There is no better symbol of the campaign to preserve the battlefield than the removal of the tower," he said.

Accompanying Babbitt for the spectacle are Park Service Director Robert Stanton and National Trust for Historic Preservation President Richard Moe.

While President Clinton was invited to the event, it is not confirmed that he will attend. "We haven't heard that he is coming. It's just a rumor," park spokeswoman Katie Lawhon said.

White House aides said the tower demolition is not on Clinton's holiday schedule, but they are considering the invitation.

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# NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## BABBITT INVOKES LINCOLN'S CHALLENGE, UNION STRUGGLE

*Marking Gettysburg Address, Interior Secretary calls for park restoration and open dialogue on race*

Office of the Secretary  
For release: November 19, 1997

Contact: John Wright  
(202) 208-6416

### Text:

*Our Unfinished Task: To restore 'what they did here' and advance 'what was said here'*

Remarks of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt

134th Anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Gettysburg, PA

Nov. 19, 1997

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"I am honored to take part in this 134th commemoration of the Gettysburg Address. In that great speech, and with characteristic modesty, Lincoln predicted "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here." We meet for the purpose of proving him wrong. Today, by tradition, we note and remember those 272 words that shall forever define our nation and what it means to be an American.

Yet before we mark what he *said here*, we must first acknowledge that we are in danger of losing part of the memory of what those brave men once *did here*.

Even as we note his immortal words, we must take note of how the battlefield over which they struggled -- ground consecrated by their blood -- today remains desecrated by an observation tower and two dilapidated and poorly sited buildings. We must note how, within those buildings, 40,000 artifacts are exposed to the ravages of damp and drafty air: The blue uniforms they once wore are now fading. The shining rifles and swords they once carried are now rusting. The once-polished leather of their belts, saddles, and bindings is now rotting apart.

Even as we recall the eloquence of his Address, we must acknowledge how the Cyclorama painting, "High Tide of the Confederacy," grows soggy with humidity in a building that has structurally failed. Rain, wind and grit continue to erode names engraved on the headstones where our ancestors lie buried. Weeds overrun the hallowed landscapes on which they died.

This is how our history risks being forgotten. Not through some abstract, sweeping blow, but through thousands of small yet palpable cuts that bleed out over time, seldom detected by the doctors of our heritage.

Americans care passionately about this sacred ground, which is why the National Park Service, under the Clinton Administration, has been dedicated to reversing its gradual deterioration. In April of 1995 we began a public planning process, open to all, in order to find the best way to preserve this shrine, to conserve its documents and artifacts and to improve the interpretation of Gettysburg in the full context of American history.

Our restoration program includes a proposal to enter a partnership on private land where groups like The National Geographic Society can help us to enhance visitor services. These partnerships are a relatively new idea and, as such, they deserve vigorous public discussion led by the historians, conservationists, and artifact curators. In the coming year, the National Park Service will also ask a distinguished group of American historians to assess our interpretive program and to make recommendations on how we can improve our ability to make both what they did here *and* what he said here reverberate more deeply in the hearts and minds of every American.

For history is dead only if we neglect it. It comes alive as we look and listen. As Lincoln said, "we cannot escape history," and through his timeless Gettysburg Address he speaks anew to each of us today.

When Lincoln, taking five bold words from the Declaration of Independence, spoke of a new nation where "all men are created equal," he set our course toward the freedom and the opportunity shared today by all Americans. Freedom and opportunity have made us, again in Lincoln's words, "the last, best hope of earth."

Yet despite the military and strategic outcome of the battle here, Lincoln spoke at an inconclusive moment in history. This cemetery was not yet complete. Some dead still lay unburied. The Civil War raged on with the Union divided. Slavery remained an institution. And human equality remained a purely hypothetical concept.

So he called on "us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work" and "to the great task remaining before us." By "us" he meant not just those living on November 19, 1963, but those of us living today, and all future generations who will ever one day live in America.

His challenge remains our unfinished task: Ensure both freedom and equality of opportunity for every single American citizen. To meet that challenge, President Clinton, in his call for a national dialogue on race relations, is asking all Americans to reflect deeply, to speak thoughtfully with each other, and to do our part to continue the work of reconciliation that Lincoln here began.

By doing our share both to restore the memory of what they did here and to advance the vision in what was said here, I am confident that Americans who gather here in centuries to come will better reflect on our county's progress toward Lincoln's fond hope of forming a more perfect Union."

--DOI--

*Our Unfinished Task: To restore 'what they did here' and advance 'what was said here'*

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# Gettysburg tower falls today

## Demolition won't end the dispute

By Jessie Halladay  
USA TODAY

GETTYSBURG, Pa. — Standing among the stone and marble monuments to fallen heroes of the Civil War's pivotal Battle of Gettysburg is a gigantic tower that has been a point of contention since it opened more than 25 years ago.

And its demolition today only feeds the controversy at Gettysburg National Military Park.

"This has been a sore spot for us for a long time," says Dave Barna, spokesman for the National Park Service. "We want our visitors ... to get a feel of what it was like at the time of the battle."

The 320-foot tower is shaped like an hourglass and has a frame of steel piping. It opened in 1974 to serve as a spot where tourists could get a panoramic view of the entire Gettysburg battlefield.

Today, tourists at the revered 5,900-acre park for the battle's 137th anniversary will see the structure come toppling down.

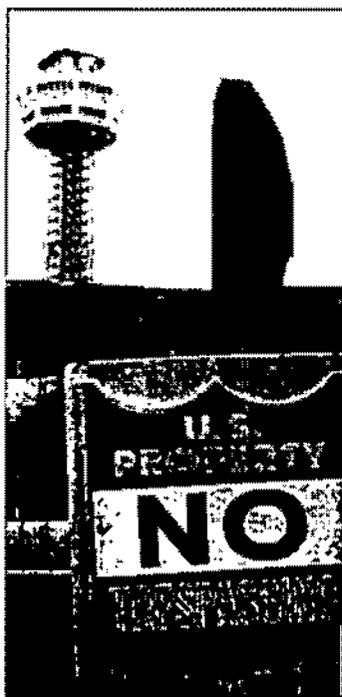
Park Superintendent John Latschar says today is a fitting time for the demolition. "I personally believe veterans of the war would think (the tower) is such a desecration that they would personally dismantle it themselves," he says.

Removing the tower is part of a Park Service plan to restore as much battlefield property as possible to its original state.

That plan includes a controversial decision to demolish the existing visitors center and have a developer build a \$39.3 million visitors center and museum complex inside the battlefield.

At the time the tower was built, the property was not Park Service land. In 1990, Congress added the tower property to the boundaries of the park. The Park Service then began taking steps to buy the tower and land.

In 1999, Congress approved more than \$1.6 million to buy the tower and its property. In June this year, a federal district court in Harrisburg granted the property to the Park Service, which allowed the agency to demolish the tower. But there was a discrepancy in how much the agency should pay the



By N. DARY BRISBY, USA TODAY

National Tower: Preservationists, park officials call it an eyesore.

owner for the tower and land.

The Park Service appraised the property at \$6.6 million in 1993. The agency says that last year it did a second appraisal, which estimated the value at \$3 million — the same amount it has deposited with the court until the value is decided.

Irwin Aronson, attorney for Thomas Ottenstein, a principal owner of the tower, says the latest appraisal is too low. It could take several more months for a value to be determined and approved by the court.

Aronson says the tower wasn't built to make money but to educate tourists. He says taking down the tower "is just fundamentally wrong and unfair."

Dubbed the "Cash Register in the Sky" early on, the tower rang up tidy sums for its operators. It generated \$300,000 to \$435,000 annually in admission fees. It was supposed to generate revenue for the park, too, but never did.

Historians say the battle at Gettysburg, fought July 1-3, 1863, marked the beginning of the end of the Civil War.

About 160,000 troops fought here. About 51,000 were killed, wounded or captured. The Union victory ended the Confederate army's campaign in the North.

Controlled Demolition Inc. of Phoenix, Md., donated its services,

Source: USA TODAY research

By Frank Pompa, USA TODAY

estimated at about \$75,000 to \$100,000, with one stipulation: The demolition would occur on the anniversary of the climactic "Pickett's charge" on July 3, 1863, when Confederate forces were defeated.

The company also got video rights to the project, even though Controlled Demolition President Mark Loizeaux says no one has shown interest in the video. The blast is scheduled for 5 p.m. ET.

For some business owners in Gettysburg, getting rid of the tower signifies heavy-handedness by the Park Service.

"There is concern with other businesses and personal residences that fall in the boundaries" that they too could be taken over by eminent domain, says Eric Uberman, a Washington, D.C., resident who owns the National Civil War Wax Museum. "This wasn't a willing seller. It was a taking."

Mary Simpson owns Big Bopper's Restaurant and Lounge next to the tower site on the outskirts of the park. He says that because of the demolition, he will have to close during one of the busiest days of the season. "I have to go along with it," Simpson says. "The Park Service is going to do what they're going to do, and there's not much you can do about it." Many who visit the park remain unaware of the controversy surrounding the

tower, although they recognize that it sticks out.

"It doesn't seem to blend in from a historical standpoint," says Jed Seybold, 45, of Exton, Pa. "It seems so modern compared to what you're facing with the Civil War."

Tower designer Joel Rosenblatt says it was not meant to blend in because it would not have been possible to build a high tower that looked like it belonged in the Civil War era. The design was meant to "minimize the visual impact" by being open and airy, he says.

The tower "doesn't bother me," says Katherine Short, 44. "The commercialization bothers me more than an observation tower. I don't see that as commercialization." Short, from Archbold, Ohio, and her family recently visited Gettysburg for the first time. She says the strip of fast-food restaurants and souvenir shops across from the park entrance do more to disturb the setting than the tower.

But for preservationists, who believe the battlefield should be kept close to its original state, taking the tower down is very exciting.

"It's a totally inappropriate intrusion on the battlefield," says Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "It distorts what the place looked like and the ability to appreciate what it looked like in 1863."

3

# Last Casualty Of Gettysburg

## Judge Says Park Service Can Bring Down Tower

By MICHAEL A. FLETCHER  
*Washington Post Staff Writer*

It has been condemned as an abomination and an eyesore, not to mention a tacky tourist trap that mars one of the nation's most hallowed sites.

Now, the privately owned, 307-foot steel observation tower that has loomed over the Gettysburg National Military Park since 1974 is scheduled to come down, appropriately enough on the anniversary of the bloody Civil War confrontation that made the site famous.

A federal judge in Harrisburg, Pa., ruled this week that the National Park Service can take possession of the National Tower through eminent domain, allowing the agency to move ahead with plans to demolish it during next month's celebration marking the 137th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg.

After thousands of people in blue and gray uniforms mark the anniversary by reenacting the bloody battle regarded as the turning point of the Civil War, the tower is scheduled

to be imploded in what many people view as the highlight of the festivities.

"The overwhelming number of people who care about Gettysburg really want to see the tower come down," said Katie Lawton, a spokeswoman for the Gettysburg National Military Park.

Irwin W. Aronson, attorney for the tower's owners, who include D.C. businessman Thomas Ottenstein, said he is exploring the legal options of his clients and could not say if he would challenge the order of U.S. District Judge Sylvia H. Rambo turning the property over to the federal government.

"It is not the most beautiful sight on which I have laid mine eyes," Aronson said. "But it is also not the offensive, obnoxious, intrusive incursion that those who don't like it describe it as. . . . If we want to be complete, we could restore the stench of rotting flesh to the battlefield. If we want to be true, that

would be true."

The tower's imminent destruction is being hailed as a victory by historic preservationists who have fought to close it from the moment construction began in 1972. Legal proceedings stopped the tower's construction at 178 feet, but in 1973, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court allowed the project to go ahead.

"Obviously, we are very pleased by this," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has worked for years to see the tower demolished. "It should have never have been built in the first place. It is totally inappropriate and it detracts from any appreciation of what happened on the battlefield in 1863."

That is an opinion shared by many history buffs and others, even if the tower has proven to be popular to thousands of tourists. Those willing to shell out \$5.25 are treated to an elevator ride to observation decks offering what tower owners describe as a bird's-eye view of the 5,900-acre national park. The historic site at-

tracts 1.7 million visitors a year.

The tower has four observation decks offering unobstructed views of the Gettysburg battlefield while a tape describing the tactical decisions of the combatants plays in the background. The 6.45-acre site, which is an island inside the national park's boundaries, also contains a souvenir shop and a parking lot. Eventually, the Park Service plans to remove the parking lot and the building housing the souvenir shop, and then restore the land to its natural state.

Barring any successful appeals by the tower's owners, Controlled Demolition Inc. of Phoenix, Md., will use a series of explosions to bring the tower down on July 3. The company is doing the demolition, valued at more than \$1 million, at no charge to the government, although the firm plans to use videos of the implosion to promote its work.

The demolition is scheduled to occur on the anniversary of Pickett's Charge, when 15,000 Confederate soldiers under the command of Gen. George Edward Pickett made a desperate and ultimately disastrous assault on the center of the Union lines. The charge proved to be the climactic event in the Battle of Gettysburg, which resulted in 23,000 Union troops killed, wounded or missing. Confederate forces suffered 28,000 casualties.

The planned demolition would fulfill a goal of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. The government has set aside \$3 million for compensation to the owners of the tower and surrounding property.

"We've been battling this thing for close to a decade one way or another," said Moe, the national trust's president. "July 3rd is going to be a splendid day."

# U.S. will demolish tower in park

## Video deal scorned for Gettysburg site

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A judge says the government can take possession of a 170-foot observation tower near the Gettysburg National Battlefield, allowing its demolition during next month's anniversary of the Civil War battle.

The judge, however, criticized the National Park Service for "poor taste" for its plan to allow a private company to demolish the 3-decade-old steel tower in exchange for using a video of the destruction in its promotions. The agency was said the company's offer is expected to save more than \$1 million.

U.S. District Court Judge Sylvia H. Rambo issued her ruling Monday in a government lawsuit seeking permission to quickly take control of the privately owned site.

Controlled Demolition Inc. of Pflugerville, Md., offered to tear down the tower for free but said it could do so only on July 3 because of other projects, according to Park Service officials. The company said its workers needed most of June to prepare the tower.

The judge allowed the government to take possession of the tower by June 15.

"In light of the fact that the offer is contingent upon permitting the demolition to take place on July 3, 2000, the government has a substantial interest in obtaining possession of the tower as soon as possible in order to permit adequate time for the preparations necessary for the demolition by that date," Judge Rambo said.

A lawyer for the tower's owner,



A couple rests on a carillon on the Gettysburg Battlefield while Gen. George G. Meade guards the giant tower, which was built 30 years ago.

Thomas Ottenstein of Overview Limited Partnership, said he was disappointed with the decision but had not made a decision regarding an appeal.

The Park Service laid claim to the tower Dec. 9 and more recently seized title to about 6 surrounding acres owned by Hans Enggren of New Oxford. The government has set aside \$3 million for compensation to the owners, an issue the judge will determine later.

July 3 is the 137th anniversary of Pickett's Charge, when 15,000 Confederate soldiers under the command of Gen. George Edward Pickett made a desperate and bloody assault on the center of the Union lines along Seminary Ridge during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Amid casualties of nearly 60 percent, several hundred Confederate troops broke the Northern line but were unable to hold their position. The attack has been called the greatest infantry charge in U.S. history.

Preservationists cheered Monday's ruling.

"We have long regarded this tower as an abomination, something that is totally inappropriate for the battlefield," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Park Service spokeswoman Katie Lawton would not respond to the judge's criticism about allowing the demolition company to use the video for commercial purposes.

# Clinton Offers Plan to Protect U.S. Shorelines

By MARC LACEY

ASSATEAGUE ISLAND, Md., May 26 — Using the sand and surf as a backdrop, President Clinton announced new initiatives today intended to preserve the nation's fragile shoreline and threatened coral reefs.

Mr. Clinton directed the Commerce Department and the Department of the Interior, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, to strengthen ocean protections through administrative steps similar to the ones applied to large tracts of land protected as wilderness areas. Coming in the final months of his presidency, Mr. Clinton's protections would not require approval by Congress but could be undone by his successor.

"Beachlines and coastlines are now our No. 1 tourist destination," the president said as he strode onto sand on this barrier island.

Our oceans, however, are far more than a playground," Mr. Clinton continued. "They have a central effect on the weather, on our climate system. Through fishing, tourism and other industries, ocean resources — listen to this — support 1 out of every 6 jobs in the United States of America."

The president, who spoke over a roaring surf as sea gulls flew overhead, directed the Interior and Commerce Departments to set up a system of "marine protected areas" to coordinate the hodgepodge of federal protections now in place for beaches, reefs and other marine habitats.

His order did not specify any areas, but it requested recommendations on shorelines in need of limits on activities like fishing, offshore oil drilling, mining and dumping.

As it is, the National Park Service protects 54 marine areas, which cover more than three million acres of water, including Glacier Bay in Alaska, the Everglades in Florida, and here on Assateague, an island renowned for the wild horses that roam its marshlands. Other marine areas have been set aside as wildlife refuges; under the supervision of the Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

plus the president," Freehand Mason, past president of the Virginia Watermen's Association, told The Associated Press. "The conservationists want to cut out all commercial fishing. They don't want any fishing except by hook and line. The waterman is an endangered species these days."

Mr. Clinton also directed the environmental agency to adopt tougher water pollution standards to protect beaches and coastal areas, and to identify areas where additional protections are required.

"They're going to go back and look at their permitting process for all of the ocean discharges that could have an impact in ocean areas, and make sure that those are fully scientifically based, and if necessary, to increase the protection," said James Baker, administrator of the oceanic and atmospheric agency.

As it is now, thousands of beaches are closed every year as heavy rains cause sewers and drains to overflow, washing sewage into the surf. That polluted runoff can cause a variety of health hazards, including dysentery and hepatitis. It also leads to the growth of toxic algae and threatens marine life.

Without better protections, polluted shorelines can only get worse as nearly half of all development in the United States is along coastlines.

Mr. Clinton also ordered the development of a plan within the next 90 days to protect the coral reefs off a 1,200-mile string of uninhabited islands in northwestern Hawaii. Coral reefs, which harbor an abundance of marine life, are threatened worldwide from pollution, overfishing and rising ocean temperatures.

The Hawaiian reefs, first protected when President Theodore Roosevelt created the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, make up nearly 70 percent of the coral in United States waters and support threatened sea turtles, monk seals and other marine life.

Mr. Clinton's plan, which will probably increase the zone of protected coral off Hawaii, would be developed in cooperation with the Hawaiian authorities, officials said.

In announcing the initiatives, Mr. Clinton made both environmental and economic arguments.

"The old idea that we can only grow by putting more pollution into our lakes and rivers and oceans must finally be put to rest," he said. "Indeed, it is now clear that we can grow our economy faster over the long run by improving our environment, and it's really not enough for us just to try to keep it as it is. We have to do better."

Although the president has used his executive authority to impose an array of environmental protections, Congress is in charge of the purse strings, and Republican leaders have been reluctant to spend money for all of what Mr. Clinton considers critical environmental priorities.

Pete Jeffries, communications director for Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois, said the president was acting unwisely by expanding protected areas without giving sufficient resources to the ones already on the books.

"Republicans want to take a responsible, common-sense approach to our environment," Mr. Jeffries said.

# Clinton Announces Plan to Protect U.S. Shorelines and Reefs



...iding on a beach yesterday on Assateague Island, Md., were President Clinton, Carl Zimmerman, a National Park ranger, and three students



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# EMERGENCY FUNDING SOUGHT TO SAVE ENDANGERED CIVIL WAR BATTLE SITES

By Michael Killian  
Washington Bureau  
May 17, 2000

WASHINGTON -- The Interior Department on Tuesday urged Congress to appropriate \$22 million for the preservation of major Civil War battlefields endangered by housing and commercial development.

Appearing at a Capitol news conference, Assistant Interior Secretary John Barry said Old Salem Church, an important landmark of the Chancellorsville campaign in Virginia, is hemmed in between "a Mattress King, a Taco Bell and a McDonald's."

In the last session of Congress, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt asked for nearly \$70 million to help save Civil War historic sites over a three-year period, but appropriation committees cut the amount to about \$10 million.

Barry was joined at the news conference Tuesday by a bipartisan group of lawmakers including Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.), Sen. James Jeffords (R-Vt.) and Sen. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.). House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula (R-Ohio) has said that Interior Department spending must be reduced by \$200 million from last year's \$14.9 billion to meet budget targets.

Barry said if action is not taken now, many of the historic sites will be lost.

Talking about a bluff where Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson stood when he

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launched the tank attack that won the battle of Chancellorsville. Barry said, "There's a line of housing developments marching right for it. Our children should be able to stand in that place and share in this history."

Under the Interior Department request, that site and others in the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania area of Virginia would received \$7.6 million for land acquisition and preservation.

Gettysburg National Military Park would get \$10 million; Harpers Ferry National Historic Park, site of John Brown's failed slave uprising, would receive \$2 million; and Manassas National Battlefield Park, where the two battles of Bull Run were fought, would get \$2 million.

Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site in Texas and Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi would also receive funds.

The Interior Department also requested an additional \$15 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to be spent on land acquisition and preservation for a number of battle sites outside of National Park Service jurisdiction, including land at Glorietta Pass, N.M., and Secessionville, S.C.

James Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust, warned that rapid real estate development threatens these sites as never before.

The Civil War Preservation Trust said Kentucky has three threatened or highly threatened sites, including Perryville.

Tennessee has 16 threatened sites, including Ft. Donelson, Murfreesborough, Stones River, Chattanooga and Franklin; and Missouri has 13, including Lexington and Springfield. Virginia, where 60 percent of the Civil War's engagements were fought, has 57 sites on the trust's threatened list.

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America's National Parks:  
The "Welcome" Sign is Out

Bruce Babbitt

Secretary of the Interior

May 23, 1994

Independence National Park

**The Park Service Mission: Two Goals**

I'd like to start this morning with a few words about my philosophy of our national parks. I do so because both our policies and our programs must always be grounded in a profound and clearly-articulated sense of the relationship between the American people and their heritage, both natural and historical.

The place to begin is the 1916 legislation that created the national park system, in which the Congress charged the National Park Service "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

On more than a few occasions these two goals -- protection of the resource and providing enjoyment for the citizens of our land -- have generated sharp conflict: whether to build a new road across the Great Smokies or across Petroglyph National Monument, or a tramway up the Guadalupe Mountains, or more visitor facilities within Denali or at the north rim of the Grand Canyon.

For my part, I concur with the recommendation of the experts who wrote the Vail Agenda that the "primary responsibility of the National Park Service must be protection of park resources." That is also the unanimous view of the hundreds of individual park rangers with whom I have shared so many wonderful days of hiking, camping, skiing, climbing and rowing in our national parks throughout my lifetime.

On my watch, the Park Service will not build additional lodging facilities within the parks. If the need arises for more overnight accommodations, then it should be done outside the parks. The gateway communities outside the parks can also serve as staging areas, where visitors can learn about the park and plan their excursions -- all without adding to the congestion inside.

On my watch, the Park Service will not be in the road building business. We have our hands full just trying to maintain existing roads. Roads are the enemies of national parks; they disrupt, divide and fragment animal habitat and the natural systems that are the very reason for the park. Our task is to invite visitors out of their cars and away from the roads.

On my watch, the Park Service will return to a focus on authenticity. The national parks are not about entertainment; Disney, Warner Brothers and so many others are masters at the task, and America's park rangers should not be competing with them. If you want to play golf, watch people feeding bears, or see a nighttime firefall -- all of which have been done in the national parks in our lifetime -- I say that's fine. Just don't expect to do it in a national park.

The purpose of our national parks is to facilitate the encounter of the American people with their natural and cultural heritage. A visit to a national park should be a voyage of discovery, bringing the visitor to a more intense appreciation of the natural world, whether seen in a sunset panorama at Grand Canyon, in a herd of grazing elk, or the face of a single flower in an alpine meadow.

We must create an environment which invites visitors to get out of their cars, to enlarge their knowledge of themselves and of their natural surroundings. Everything we do -- every change we make -- must encourage this encounter.

### **Moving Forward: Resource Protection and a Focus on Ecosystems**

We must also consider other implications of the term "preserve unimpaired," because it is no longer enough to focus on the nature of developments *within* the Park boundary.

Those empty spaces that we used to rely upon to buffer and protect our parks are disappearing. When Yosemite was created 120 years ago, it was surrounded by vast open spaces. One could go out, create a national park somewhere by putting a fence around it, and assume it would take care of itself. But the West is filling up and everywhere there are people and new claims on minerals, water, timber and geothermal resources.

Today, the plain fact is that parks are a part -- usually a central part -- of a broader ecosystem in which everything interweaves with everything else. And the Park Service must now consider new methods for protecting its resource base; we must begin to focus on parks not as distinct entities in themselves, but as the centers of ecosystems.

At Yellowstone, massive herds of elk and buffalo (and soon, perhaps, the gray wolf) do not acknowledge the straight lines on a map; those animals inherited an entire ecosystem, and park staff must work closely with resource managers from other state and federal agencies to protect their migration range.

Everglades National Park lies on the edge of an ecosystem literally on the brink of extinction. Exotic plant species, encouraged by nutrient-rich agricultural runoff, have crowded out watered areas. The hydrologic connection that sustains the Everglades system has been severed by agricultural developments. The steady sheet flows of water heading south from Lake Okeechobee that once supplied the Everglades with its fresh lifeforce are now diverted to other uses. As a result, the vast flocks of wading birds have moved out, heading north for lack of water. And the Florida panther is on the

brink of extinction. The park's fate lies not in the hands of its rangers, but in the hands of government officials and private land owners throughout the region.

The Sierra Nevada Parks have air quality problems worse than many large cities, causing problems for plants, animals and humans. But the source of the problem lies hundreds of miles away in California's urban centers. In Sequoia National Park, we now have signs on certain trails telling hikers to avoid strenuous exercise because of the dangerous levels of ozone pollution.

Natural conditions at the Grand Canyon are now under the influence of Bureau of Reclamation, which determines water flows below Glen Canyon Dam, and the Federal Aviation Administration, which determines the amount and the timing of commercial helicopter and fixed wing overflights in the canyon.

The geyser field at Yellowstone is one of only eleven known geyser fields in the world. Of those eleven, eight have already been destroyed. The Old Faithful Protection Act will protect the world famous geyser field by regulating geothermal development within 15 miles of the park. Already passed in the House, the bill is still awaiting action in the Senate.

Clearly, it is no longer sufficient to label land a "park" and assume it is protected, and we are now on the path of moving beyond parks and beginning to see ecosystems whole.

### **Moving Forward: New Parks**

I am frequently asked whether we have enough national parks. My answer is "no," for a number of reasons.

50 years ago there was no Martin Luther King Jr. Historical Site to be preserved because that chapter of our history had not yet been written.

The movement to create urban parks, exemplified by Gateway National Park in New York City, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Presidio in San Francisco, and the Santa Monica National Recreation Area outside Los Angeles, is just beginning.

The Kansas tallgrass prairie reminds us of how perceptions change. A century ago, we crossed the midwest in search of scenic splendor, oblivious to the extraordinary biodiversity being plowed up and taken for granted -- biodiversity equivalent to a tropical rainforest. Now, enlightened by the attitudes and perceptions of a new generation, we go back to acknowledge the importance of that resource.

The California Desert Protection Act makes the same point. Generations in search of alpine scenery in our parks simply walked on past some of the most unique ecosystems in all of America. The California Desert Protection Act would bring under Park Service management 1.6 million acres of lands unsurpassed in their scenic, biological, cultural and recreational significance.

This process of reevaluation must continue indefinitely and, while we must ensure adequate protection for existing sites, we must always be receptive to new opportunities to expand our system of national parks.

## Moving Forward: Securing the Financial Base

This is a tough time for the National Park Service and for the Interior Department; we are in the midst of an unprecedented budget crisis. The Department will absorb a net cut in the next fiscal year. This crisis will continue through the foreseeable future.

There are small, but essential steps to help the Park Service establish a more secure footing. One of those steps is concession management contracts. In the past, many park concessions were on sided contracts favoring commercial interests with good political connections. We've broken the mold and have begun to negotiate more equitable contracts. The new concessions contract at Yosemite will, in many ways, serve as a model for the future: it provides both a fair return and a means of improving park infrastructure. Senator Dale Bumpers has sponsored a bill which builds upon the Yosemite model; passage of that bill is a priority for the Park Service.

We must also address the issue of entrance fees. Of the 367 park facilities, only half even charge an entrance fee. Only 15 charge the maximum entrance rate of \$5 per vehicle, and only three parks are authorized to charge more than \$5: Yellowstone, Grand Teton and Grand Canyon charge \$10 per car.

When Hattie and I take our two sons to a movie, we probably pay three times as much as the Yellowstone entrance fee -- and we do so for two hours of entertainment. When I discussed this with Dan Sholly, Yellowstone's Chief Ranger, he told me that back in 1915 the entrance fee at Yellowstone was \$15 -- 50 percent higher than it is today, and a lot higher than in real inflation-adjusted dollars. An Administration proposal would return to the Secretary the authority to set reasonable fees for parks.

And as I've considered the real value of \$15 admission fees in 1915, I ask myself if the American people would be willing to pay a little more for this experience and for having the satisfaction of knowing they were helping to sustain that resource.

I went out to Great Falls National Park to try out these concepts. One Saturday morning last fall, I stood by the entrance area and did a little poll, asking visitors who currently pay \$4 if they would pay a couple of dollars more to enter this national park. About 80 percent had a simple answer: "No way." I then followed my political experience with pollsters and decided to frame the question correctly. So I went back out and asked if they would pay a few dollars more in admission fees if they knew the funds were

going to be kept in that park to repair the boat house at Lock 6 and to fix up the trail along the towpath. Phrased that way, the answer was 80 percent "yes."

That is our challenge -- to persuade the United States Congress to recognize the level of public support for the National Parks, and to let loose their grasp to allow the Secretary to set fees and keep those proceeds in the parks. It's that simple.

### **Moving Forward: Protecting Those Who Protect the Parks**

In this budget context, the Park Service is engaged in a restructuring -- one that involves staff cuts in some locations. But even with this in mind, we have made this commitment clear: we will not, in any way, reduce the number of rangers now working in our parks. Any sacrifices demanded of the Park Service will be absorbed in the national and regional offices. Nothing can, or will, interfere with the essential and authentic visitor experience.

But to protect that experience, we must also protect, and do justice to, the men and women who run our national parks. For the last several generations, we've been exploiting the personnel of the National Park Service. We've exploited them because it's been generally understood that there are many Americans who love the outdoors, have natural science backgrounds, have talents in dealing with people -- and who desperately want to work for the Park Service. We've played on the good will and the extraordinary affection these people have for the Service; we've taken advantage of their great dedication. Thus, rangers and park personnel have steadily been eroding on the pay and stature ratings relative to other federal employees.

We are committed to reversing this shabby record, and the first step is a program called "Ranger Futures." This program, which goes into effect on July 1, sends a strong message to park employees. We will reexamine every grade attached to a job in the Park Service, and reclassify those in which employees are clearly doing the same kind of work done in other agencies at a much higher pay grade.

Next comes the issue of Park Service housing. America's most respected Federal employees are living in its worst conditions. My visits to Park Service housing clusters often remind me of Third World slums. Some of the trailers in which permanent rangers are living are so waterlogged they are crumbling to pieces. To salvage what they possibly can, some inventive maintenance staffs actually built independent roof shelters over the ruins of these trailers. (It reminds me of Casa Grande National Monument in Arizona -- where a canopy covers prehistoric ruins.) At Channel Islands National Park rangers live in converted shipping containers. Yellowstone trailers are often covered with tires so the roofs won't blow off.

At Great Smoky Mountain National Park, we've begun to address this problem. Jim Barna Log Homes donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in materials, and the log home building industry provided more than 100 volunteers. In one day, from sunrise to sunset, we erected, from foundation to roof enclosure, a high quality log cabin dormitory for eight people.

This uniquely American barn raising was done with the help of the private sector, and we are now exploring partnerships to help us address the park housing crisis on national basis; that program will be announced in a matter of weeks. I know that somewhere out there, all over this country, people, businesses and corporations are ready to step forward, if only we can together light that spark and rekindle the relationship of people to their parks.

And it is on that relationship that I wish to close.

### **The Park Service Mission: An Urgent Message to the American People**

I've already explained my view of a national park as a place -- the place -- for Americans to enjoy and relate to their heritage. And that is why I do not share the notion that we are "loving the parks to death" and that the answer to budget shortfalls and summer crowding is to keep people out.

To the contrary, I want to keep the "WELCOME" sign out and encourage all Americans to use the parks that belong to them.

When crowding becomes a problem, the challenge is to use more ingenuity with better transit systems, more staging areas outside park boundaries, good reservation systems, campgrounds on public lands adjacent to parks, inducements to visit during the "shoulder" season -- the list is as long as our imagination and desire to serve the American people.

And there is still another reason to keep the "WELCOME" sign out. Throughout the world, we see each day new evidence of ecological collapse. In coming years we must accelerate our efforts to impart a conservation ethic and to communicate ways of living more lightly on this land of ours. What better place to begin than in our national parks?

The parks are the windows through which the American people can rediscover and renew this connection to the natural world. The parks are where that educational process begins most easily -- where the natural stage settings and the actors are the best in the world.

The pathway to a new American environmental ethic must begin then with people -- people in the process of discovering their heritage and shaping their future. It is an encounter that begins most naturally in our national parks.

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I am pleased to join with all of you to celebrate the 75th birthday of this marvelous Canyon. I want especially to acknowledge the presence of Senator DeConcini and Senator McCain, both of whom have done so much for the Park Service and the Canyon. Our two Senators come here today in the tradition of Senator Goldwater and Senator Hayden and many other Arizonans, in public and private life, who have helped make the Grand Canyon such a great National Park.

Last week, preparing for this visit, I had occasion to read through the brief record of the Congressional debates that led to the birth of Grand Canyon National Park in 1919. And those debates have a remarkably familiar ring.

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\* Then as now, the Congress was debating concessions policy.

\* Then as now, there was a spirited debate about property rights and condemnation powers - at that time the issue was to clear title to the Bright Angel Trail.

\* Then as now, there was a debate about storage reservoirs on the Colorado River. And there was even a debate about earmarking fees for use in the park of origin.

But the hottest issue of all back in 1919 was transportation. Senator (then Congressman) Hayden, a prime sponsor of the legislation, wanted to build a railroad built from Utah down to serve the North Rim, just as the Santa Fe Railroad came up from Williams to

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the South Rim. Arguing that a North Rim railroad "would present possibly a more wonderful view than from the south side," Hayden wanted to finance that railroad by selling timber rights on the North Kaibab. Aware that park proponents in Congress would never support such a scheme, Senator Hayden wanted legislation that would leave the decision on a North Rim railroad to the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior.

Senator Hayden's railroad policy was complicated by the fact that most members didn't have any idea of the magnitude of the Canyon. One Congressman seemed to think that Hayden was proposing to construct a railroad all the way across the Canyon from north to south.

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The good Senator patiently explained why no railroad would ever cross the Canyon and he then argued his case for giving the Secretary of the Interior authority to decide.

"This park will be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior. No Secretary of the Interior would think of permitting any railroad to be constructed that would in any way impair the scenic beauties of the Grand Canyon, but, on the other hand, he would undoubtedly favor the construction of railroads for the convenience of the public."

Right there, in those two sentences, Senator Hayden captured the essential conflict that has confronted every Secretary since 1919 -

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how best to reconcile the two conflicting mandates of the National Park Service - to preserve nature "unimpaired" while providing for the "enjoyment" of the public.

Today, 75 years later, we are still debating transportation policy. The issue today is not how to encourage more visitation, but rather how to deal with the 5,000,000 visitors already at the gates and the hundreds of millions of people all over the world who are even now dreaming and planning for the day they can bring their families to our canyon.

The ultimate question of how many people this Park can accommodate is not easy to answer because it depends on other fundamental questions - such as, what

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type of transportation and what kind of visitor experience should we provide?

In Carl Hayden's day, the answer was simple; travel was expensive and time consuming, and once you finally got there, whether by the Santa Fe Railroad from Williams or by the increasingly popular touring car, you had better well stay right here on the premises. Steven Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, recognized that reality, and he encouraged Fred Harvey to keep building more accommodations to keep them coming. My own ancestors, with a stake in South Rim concessions, were vigorous supporters of that policy.

More recently, however, the Park Service has begun to edge away from this early "field of dreams" policy.

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Grand Canyon village on a summer day is cluttered and crowded beyond any semblance of a true park experience. Mather Point, where most tourists stop for their first view, is the world's busiest parking lot, a veritable jungle of cars, campers, recreation vehicles and buses belching diesel fumes.

The Park Service and most friends of the Canyon now recognize that the key to a better visitor experience is to direct all future expansion of visitor facilities - and perhaps some of the existing facilities - outside the park. This trend is already apparent in the gateway communities springing up and expanding outside our national parks.

The future of these communities and the way in which growth is planned will have major impacts on the

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future of our parks. The National Park Service does not and should not control land use planning in communities outside the boundaries of the park. The Park Service does, however, have an direct stake in the development of gateway communities in Northern Arizona, and it is simply this - -

The day is coming when it will be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior to limit vehicle entry to the South Rim in order to protect both the park resource and the quality of the visitor experience within the Park. Entry restrictions on motor vehicles could lead to reduced visitation -but that is not an inevitable result. The real issue is separating the visitors from their automobiles, and thereby providing an enhanced Park experience for all

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who want to come.

Whether visitors will still come, even without their autos, depends on how attractive the mass transit alternatives are. Consumers have many choices; the world is full of vacation planners offering alternative travel packages. Whether visitors elect to come to Grand Canyon, or to head straight down I-40 toward Disneyland will depend in some measure whether, working together, we can offer mass transit that is convenient, affordable, attractive, and well coordinated with lodging and other services in the gateway communities. The success of the revived Grand Canyon Railroad (that's the South Rim Railroad) provides encouraging evidence that, given the

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right inducements, visitors are willing to leave their cars outside the Park.

Our ability to make a smooth, user friendly switch to mass transit depends in some large measure on investments within the Park made by the Congress. But it will also depend heavily on how the communities of Northern Arizona plan uses outside the park: visitor facilities, railroad stops, restaurants, lodging, parking, campgrounds and aviation uses must be configured to support the development of convenient and attractive mass transit.

The National Park Service has been thinking about and working on these issues, principally within Park boundaries, for several years, and the Park Superintendent

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will shortly release a discussion draft of management options for the future at the South Rim.

When that plan is released in early 1995, we will have an unprecedented opportunity to work together to plan for the next century at Grand Canyon. There will be a window of opportunity for the National Park Service and state and local governments to work together with the private sector to prepare a vision for a 21st century partnership between Grand Canyon National Park and northern Arizona.

When the draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement is released in November, it will be time to expand the dialogue beyond the Park

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boundaries to all of the surrounding communities and governments. Events outside the park are also moving in this direction. The Tusayan Area Plan being developed by Coconino County is scheduled for completion at the end of 1994. The Regional Transportation Committee, sponsored by the Northern Arizona Council of Governments, is moving to complete a study on development of outlying staging areas in existing communities and the development of efficient and effective systems of alternative modes of transportation to the South Rim. Parallel efforts are underway for water (the Glen Canyon EIS), regional air quality and canyon overflight.

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For all these reasons, the time is now at hand to bring these efforts together. The Canyon has a talented and energetic new superintendent, Rob Arnberger. I have discussed these issues extensively with him, and I can assure you that he is ready to support such an effort. Therefore, before year end, I will ask representatives of the Governor, the Congressional delegation, the Forest Service, Coconino County, neighboring Indian tribes, Tusayan, Williams, Flagstaff, the Grand Canyon Trust, the transportation and lodging businesses, Northern Arizona University, and others to participate in a task force for a 21st century partnership between the Park and its neighbors. I will charge this group, working in public with all interested parties,

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to provide, as soon as possible, a comprehensive regional plan for the 21st century.

The day when parks can stand alone as enclaves separated in space and by law from their neighbors is long gone, if indeed it ever existed at all. The time is now at hand to see our respective responsibilities and opportunities whole, to look across our respective jurisdictional boundaries and to meet the next century in a spirit of cooperation and sound planning.

I look forward to working with all of you. Thank  
you -