

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

March 11, 2013

Don L. Neubacher, Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389
Attn: Tuolumne River Plan DEIS

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River
Comprehensive Management Plan, Yosemite National Park, California (CEQ#20130003)

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above project. Our review and comments are pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA understands that a new Wild and Scenic Management Plan is needed for the protection of Tuolumne River values including water quality, riparian habitats, and visitor experience. The preferred alternative (Alternative 4) would provide a great number of visitor opportunities while still maintaining the integrity of natural and cultural resources. Based on our review, EPA has rated the proposed project as Lack of Objections (see enclosed "Summary of EPA Rating Definitions").

Alternative 4 proposes to eliminate concessioner stock rides to Glen Aulin camp and to reduce stock day rides along the Tuolumne Meadows and Tioga Road corridor (p. 7-88 through 7-89). It is unclear whether the stock rides that transport supplies to the High Sierra camps would be eliminated, as well, or whether they would be reduced or expanded in number. We recommend that the Final EIS provide clarification of the number of commercial versus supply stock rides that would operate in the river corridor under the Preferred Alternative, including the associated impacts.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this Draft EIS. Should you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Stephanie Skophammer, the lead reviewer for the project. Stephanie can be reached at (415) 972-3098 or skophammer.stephanie@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

Enclosures: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions