April-May 2009

Yosemite Guide

Experience Your America Yosemite National Park

Vol. 34, Issue No.3

Inside:

01 Things to Do
03 Programs and Events
05 Earth Day Events
07 Visitor Services
10 Special Feature: Swiftwater: Avoid the Danger Zone

Where to Go and What to Do in Yosemite National Park

April 15 - May 26, 2009

Yosemite Falls and Merced River flood. Photo by Anthony Germain.
How to Use Your Yosemite Guide

The list on this page offers 10 popular things to do. The table of contents (“What’s Inside…”) at lower right shows where you can turn for more information. A detailed listing of program information can be found on page 3.

Keep this Guide with you to get the most out of your visit.
Discover Yosemite
Let your curiosity guide you to new places.

Yosemite Valley

Even if you’ve been here before, the Valley is packed with wonders to keep you exploring. Campsite reservations are limited, but the Valley is open every day and may be reached via Highway 41 from Fresno, Highway 140 from Merced, Highway 120 west from Manteca. Here you will find the park’s main visitor center—a base for further exploration.

Crane Flat

Crane Flat is a pleasant forest and meadow area located 16 miles from Yosemite Valley at the junction of Big Oak Flat and Tioga Roads. To see giant sequoias, park at the Tuolumne Grove parking area, and walk one steep mile down to the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias. Or, park at Merced Grove trailhead and walk two steep miles down to this small grove.

Wawona and Mariposa Grove

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is located 36 miles from Yosemite Valley via the Wawona Road (Highway 41), two miles from the park’s South Entrance station. The road to the Mariposa Grove is closed to cars from sometime in December to April. The nearby Pioneer Yosemite History Center in Wawona is a collection of historic buildings associated with people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite.

Hetch Hetchy

Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, a source of drinking water and hydroelectric power for the City of San Francisco, is also home to spectacular scenery and the starting point for many wilderness trails. Hetch Hetchy Reservoir is located 40 miles from Yosemite Valley via Highway 120 and Evergreen and Hetch Hetchy Roads. The Hetch Hetchy Road is open 7 am through 8 pm through April 30. Hours extend to 7 am to 9 pm as of May 1.

Entrance Fees
Reservations are NOT required to enter Yosemite. The park is open year-round, 24 hours a day.

Vehicle $20
Valid for 7 days

Individual $10
In a bus, on foot, bicycle, motorcycle, or horse. Valid for 7 days.

Yosemite Pass $40
Valid for one year in Yosemite.

Interagency Annual Pass $80
Valid for one year at all federal recreation sites.

Interagency Senior Pass $10 (Lifetime)
For U.S. citizens or permanent residents 62 and over.

Interagency Access Pass (Free)
For permanently disabled U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Reservations
Campground Reservations
www.recreation.gov

Lodging Reservations
www.yosemitepark.com

Regional Info
Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) www.yarts.com

West Highway 120
Yosemite Chamber of Commerce
800/449-9120 or 209/962-0429

Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
800/446-1333
www.thegetraunfenced.com

Highway 41
Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau
559/831-4636
www.yosemiteisyear.com

Highway 132/49
Coulterville Visitor Center
209/878-3074

Highway 140/49
Yosemite Mariposa Tourism Bureau
866/425-3366 or 209/966-7081
www.homeofyosemite.com

Highway 120 East
Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce and Mono Lake Visitor Center, 760/647-6629
www.leevingin.com

California Welcome Center, Merced
800/646-5353 or 209/384-2791
www.yosemite-gateway.org

Programs at right printed in color are specially designed for children and their families.

Key to Events and Programs
NPS National Park Service
DNC DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.
AAG The Ansel Adams Gallery
Yosemite Association
S Programs offered for a fee

Facilities accessible to visitors in wheelchairs.
A sign language interpreter may be available for deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors. Contact 209/372-4726 (TTY) or 209/372-0645 to request an interpreter. Advance notice of 2 weeks is requested.

Assistive Listening Devices are available upon advance request.
**Events and Programs**

**Yosemite Valley**

- Coffee with a Ranger (Starts in May) 1 hr. Bring a mug. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Photography Walk (1 h). Limited space. Reservations required. Sign up at the Ansel Adams Gallery (conditions permitting) (AAG)
- Ranger Stroll - Rivers and Waterfalls 1½ hrs. Lower Yosemite Fall, shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Junior Ranger Upper Yosemite (Stamping stops, near shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Ranger Stroll - Bears [Starts in May] 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC)
- Yosemite Theater LIVE: Conversations with a Tramp (May 10, 17 & 24 6½ hrs. Valley Visitor Center Theater (YA) $)
- Contoocook Memorial Lodge 1 hr. Shuttle stop #12 (Sierra Club)
- Yosemite Theater LIVE: Conversations with a Tramp (May 3 only) John Muir & Teddy Roosevelt in Yosemite, 1903; (May 24 only) John Muir’s Plant Collecting
- Ranger Program (Starts in May) 1 hr. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Evening Program (Starts in May) 1 hr. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)

- Coffee with a Ranger (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Bring a mug. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Photography Walk (1½ h). Limited space. Reservations required. Sign up at the Ansel Adams Gallery (conditions permitting) (AAG)
- Ranger Stroll - Trees 1½ hrs. The Ahwahnee, shuttle stop #3 (NPS)
- Yosemite Forum [May 12 only] 1 hr. Selected lectures by scientists working in the park. East Auditorium (NPS) $)
- Junior Ranger Upper Yosemite (Stamping stops, near shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Using Your Digital Camera Class 4 hrs. Sign up at the Yosemite Lodge Amphitheater (DNC) $)
- Ranger Stroll - Bears [Starts in May] 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Spring Twilight Stroll 1½ hrs. The Ahwahnee patio (DNC)
- Ranger Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Yosemite Lodge Amphitheatre (DNC) $)
- Evening Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Yosemite Lodge Amphitheater (DNC) $)
- Evening Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Yosemite Lodge Amphitheater (DNC) $)

**Wawona / Mariposa Grove**

- Coffee with a Ranger (Except April 19 & 26 ½ hrs. Wawona Campground Amphitheater, Canyon) $)
- Ranger Stroll - Rivers and Waterfalls 1½ hrs. Lower Yosemite Fall, shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Junior Ranger Upper Yosemite (Stamping stops, near shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Discovery Hike - Vernal Falls Bridge 3 hrs. Curry Village Mountaineering School. Tickets at any tour desk (YMS)
- Ranger Stroll - Bears [Starts in May] 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Ranger Stroll - Bears [Starts in May] 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Poets and Parks: A Walk and Reading (April 18 only) 1½ hrs. Meet Glen Clark: Guardian of Yosemite (May 15 only) ALONG THE JOHN MUIR TRAIL (May 22 only) Underground Botany: Surprising Connections
- Ranger Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Evening Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)

**Crane Flat / Hetch Hetchy**

- Coffee with a Ranger (Except April 19 & 25) ½ hrs. Wawona Campground Amphitheater, Canyon) $)
- Ranger Stroll - Rivers and Waterfalls 1½ hrs. Lower Yosemite Fall, shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Junior Ranger Upper Yosemite (Stamping stops, near shuttle stop #46 (NPS)
- Hidden Giants and the Tuolumne Grove 3 hrs. Informal talks in the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias (NPS)
- Yosemite Theater LIVE: Return to Balance (Climbing film) (Starts in May) 1 hr. Curry Village Amphitheater (DNC) $)
- LeConte Memorial Lodge 1 hr. Shuttle stop #12 (Sierra Club)
- Yosemite Theater LIVE: Return to Balance (Climbing film) (Starts in May) 1 hr. Curry Village Amphitheater (DNC) $)
- Ranger Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)
- Evening Program (Starts in May) 1½ hrs. Lower Pines Campground Amphitheater (NPS)

**Yosemite Guide April 15 - May 26, 2009**
Experience Yosemite

Yosemite National Park embraces one of the world’s most outstanding concentrations of spectacular mountain-and-valley scenery. Its Sierran setting harbors a grand collection of high waterfalls and forests, including three groves of giant sequoias.

Yosemite Valley

An unlimited array of possibilities await you in Yosemite Valley. Most involve sightseeing and learning about the scenery before you. See pages 3, 6, and 7 for more information on program topics and visitor services available.

The base of Lower Yosemite Fall is usually an easy walk from shuttle stop #6. Bicycle trails offer an alternate way to access the trailhead. The hike features educational exhibits and a picnic area, and is accessible to the mobility impaired when the path is clear. More adventurous hikers can spend several hours switchbacking to an area near the top of Upper Yosemite Fall.

Bridalveil Fall is another waterfall that you can visit by car on your way into or out of the Valley.

El Capitan, a massive granite monolith, stands 3,593 feet from base to summit at the west end of the Valley.

Half Dome, Yosemite’s most distinctive monument, dominates most views in Yosemite Valley. Forces of uplift, erosion from rivers and glaciers, and rockfall all shaped this famous feature into what we see today. Cook’s Meadow, Sentinel Bridge, Tunnel View, Glacier Point, and Olmsted Point are just a few locations with stunning views of Half Dome.

Happy Isles is a place to see dramatic natural processes at work. It is easily reached by shuttle at stop #16. Cross the footbridges onto the Isles or wander through outdoor exhibits detailing Yosemite’s geologic story. You can park at Curry Village and walk too. It takes about 15 minutes to get there.

For a strenuous day hike, you can use this trailhead to reach Vernal Fall footbridge (¾ miles) and Nevada Fall (2.7 miles) via the Mist Trail. This portion of the trail is closed when ice or high water makes the route hazardous. Please observe warning signs along the trail, and always pack your trash out.

A Valley sightseeing tour is offered in Yosemite throughout the year. The Valley Floor Tour is a 26-mile, two-hour tour that departs several times daily from Yosemite Lodge. Tours travel by enclosed motorcoach. An experienced guide narrates the tour. Only very poor weather cancels it. An open-top tram is used during warmer weather.

You can experience the Valley by bike by bringing your own, or by renting at Curry Village or Yosemite Lodge. Rental offices are open 10 am to 4 pm, closed 1:30 to 2 pm for lunch.

A variety of other bus and open-top tram tours are offered each week. Call 209/372-1240 for reservations or inquire at the tour and transportation or info desks at Yosemite Lodge, Yosemite Village, Curry Village, and The Ahwahnee.

For more information on program topics and visitor services available, see pages 3, 6, and 7.
Wawona

Located six miles from the park’s South Entrance or a one-hour drive from the Valley, the Wawona area tells the story of Yosemite’s human history and pioneer past. The charming 19th-century Wawona Hotel and the Pioneer Yosemite History Center are a history buff’s delight. The center is a collection of historic buildings associated with the people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite. Interpretive signs and a brochure provide a self-guiding tour. Also in Wawona, you will find hikes of varying difficulty to places like Wawona Meadow and Chilnualna Falls, one of the tallest outside Yosemite Valley.

Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is Yosemite’s largest stand of giant sequoias (about 500 trees). When it opens, you can park near the grove and walk in or take an open-air tram tour.

Hetch Hetchy

Hetch Hetchy Valley is accessible via the Big Oak Flat Road and Evergreen and Hetch Hetchy Roads; it is 40 miles from Yosemite Valley. The Hetch Hetchy Road is open 7 am to 8 pm through April 30. The road is open until 9 pm starting May 1. Call 209/372-0200 for the most up-to-date information. Vehicles over 25 ft. are prohibited on the narrow Hetch Hetchy Road. Once considered a twin to Yosemite Valley, this valley was described by John Muir as “a grand landscape garden.” Hetch Hetchy is located along the Tuolumne River in the northern part of the park and now contains a large reservoir. Hetch Hetchy’s relatively low elevation gives the area one of the longest hiking seasons in Yosemite National Park.

Glacier Point

The Glacier Point Road is anticipated to open for visitor traffic by May. (You can get the latest road-closure info at the Valley Visitor Center.) At Glacier Point, you can go to the railing’s edge and catch your breath at an exhilarating view, looking down 3,214 feet to the Valley floor.

Tuolumne Meadows

Tioga Road, which links east and west segments of California Hwy 120, will likely open in May. Although Tuolumne Meadows is only a 1.5 hour drive (55 miles) from Yosemite Valley, it is a world apart. Moving through elevations 6,200 to almost 10,000 feet at Tioga Pass, the road gives access to high country hiking and climbing. As the snow melts, hiking options increase. Campgrounds are expected to open in June. Wilderness permits will be available at the Tuolumne Meadows Wilderness Center once the road opens.

April 25: National Junior Ranger Day

Join rangers and DNC staff for guided and drop-in activities. Meet at the Nature Center at Happy Isles. Adult accompaniment REQUIRED for all events.

10:00am
Wax Wild Ones 1 hr. Recommended for ages 8 and under.
Exploration Fair 4 hrs. Drop-in activities.
1:00pm
Search and Rescue Demonstration See search and rescue techniques.
Learn and Serve 2 hrs. Recommended for ages 7-13.
Wax Wild Ones 1 hr. Recommended for ages 8 and under.
Vernal Fall Hike 2 hrs. Ranger-led hike for ages 14 and up, accompanied by adult.

Wawona: Pines & Golf at 4,000 ft.

The fairways at Wawona make up the only golf course in a U.S. national park. The 9-hole course is open from 9 am to 5 pm daily, conditions permitting. Wawona greens are the first in California to be maintained by wholly organic means (no synthetic pesticides or fertilizer). Join managers for a Golf Course Talk from 10 am to 2 pm on Sunday, April 19 to learn more.

Earth Day Events April 17-22

Earth Day is Wednesday, April 22. But the park celebration will spread across the week.

Earth Day Family Night
7pm on Friday, April 17. Launch Earth Day festivities with song, dance, and entertainment. Yosemite Lodge Amphitheater.

Village Mall Celebration
10:30am-2pm on Saturday, April 18. Daylong displays and activities at the Village Mall, in front of the Valley Visitor Center.

Golf Course Talk
10am on Sunday, April 19. See box at left.

Pedal, Play, and Protect
2pm on Wednesday, April 22. Tickets for educational bike ride can be purchased at tour desks.

EarthDance Film Festival
7pm on Wednesday, April 22. Short environmental films. Free. Visitor Center Theater.

Every Day is Earth Day
8pm on Wednesday, April 22. Tom Bopp explores the park roles of John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt. Wawona Hotel.
Note that some tours and roads familiar to summer visitors do not reopen until May or June.

**Throughout Yosemite National Park**

Spring is a time of dramatic growth and motion and offers special opportunities for adventure and photography. Note that some tours and roads familiar to summer visitors do not reopen until May or June.

**Yosemite Valley**

Valley Visitor Center and Bookstore

Visitor center and bookstore hours are 9 am to 5 pm through May 3. Starting on Monday, May 4, hours extend to 9 am to 7:30 pm. The center is just west of the main post office (shuttle stops #5 and #9). The facility offers information, maps, and books, in the attached bookstore.

Explore the exhibit hall and learn how Yosemite’s spectacular landscape formed and how people interact with it.

**FILM: SPIRIT OF YOSEMITE**

This inspiring visitor-orientation film provides a stunning overview of Yosemite’s splendor. It is shown every 30 minutes, Monday through Saturday between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm, and Sunday between noon to 4:30 pm (daily to 5:30 pm starting May 4) in the Valley Visitor Center Theater.

**Internet Access**

Fee-based terminals are open at Degnan’s Deli. Free internet access is available at the Mariposa County library, south of the Yosemite Cemetery. Hours vary. Ask at the Valley Visitor Center.

**Yurt Info Station**

Starting May 1, Yosemite Association volunteers will staff an information station at Visitor Parking (see map on back of this Guide). Yurt Information Station hours are 10 am to 4 pm daily.

**Yosemite Museum**

Located in Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center.

**INDIAN CULTURAL EXHIBIT**

Open 9 am to 5 pm. Interprets the cultural history of Yosemite’s Miwok and Paiute people from 1850 to the present.

**YOSEMITE RENAISSANCE ART SHOW**

Yosemite Renaissance is a free art show at the Yosemite Museum Gallery. The art exhibit ends May 3.

**Wilderness Center**

The Valley Wilderness Center is located in Yosemite Village and opens May 1. Hours are 8 am to 4:30 pm. Wilderness permits, info, and bear canister rentals are available. Phone: 209/372-0745.

**Ansel Adams Gallery**

In Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center, the gallery is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm through May 9. After May 9 it’s open from 9 am to 6 pm. The gallery offers the work of Ansel Adams, other photographers and artists, camera walks, workshops, and classes. Activities are listed on the front porch. Call 209/372-4413, or visit www.anseladams.com

**At the Gallery in May**

Art Wolfe, color images from around the world. A reception for the artist and book-signing will be held from 4 to 6 pm on Monday, May 11.

**Opening May 15**

Charles Cramer, recent color photographs from Yosemite and beyond. A reception for the artist and book-signing will be held from 3 to 5 pm on Friday, May 15.

**Books, Gifts & Apparel**

**Yosemite Village**

**The Ahwahnee**

**Ansel Adams Gallery**

**Fees**

- Permitting for backcountry: 209/372-0725
- Nature center: 209/372-0728
- Parking: 209/372-0729
- Information: 209/372-0728
- Post office: 209/372-0745

**POST OFFICE**

Yosemite Village

Main Office

Monday-Friday: 8:30am to 5pm

Saturday: 10am to noon

Yosemite Lodge

Post Office

Monday-Friday: 12:30pm to 2:45pm

El Portal

Post Office

Monday-Friday: 8:30am to 5pm
closed for lunch from 12:30 to 7:30

Wawona Post Office

Monday-Friday: 9am to 5pm

Saturday: 9am to noon

**BOOKS, GIFTS & APPAREL**

**Yosemite Village**

**The Ahwahnee**

**The Ansel Adams Gallery**

**Yosemite Village**

**Curry Village**

**Wawona**

**POST OFFICE**

Yosemite Village

Main Office

Monday-Friday: 8:30am to 5pm

Saturday: 10am to noon

Yosemite Lodge

Post Office

Monday-Friday: 12:30pm to 2:45pm

El Portal

Post Office

Monday-Friday: 8:30am to 5pm
closed for lunch from 12:30 to 7:30

Wawona Post Office

Monday-Friday: 9am to 5pm

Saturday: 9am to noon
Visitor Services
Locations and hours across the park


come visit the newly renovated lobby and exhibit hall, featuring full-scale reproductions of Thomas hill's paintings. the exhibit hall tells the story of hill, landscape painting, and park preservation.

Wawona Pioneer Yosemite History Center
Go back to a time of horse-drawn wagons, a covered bridge, and log cabins. A visit to the Pioneer Yosemite History Center explains how Yosemite inspired national parks across America and around the world. The center is open throughout the year.

Evening Programs
Join pianist/singer Tom Bopp in the Wawona Hotel lobby from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, as he performs songs and tells stories from Yosemite's past.

Wawona Visitor Center at Hill's Studio
Tucked up the hill. More info: 209/375-9531.

Open 8:30 am to 5 pm beginning May 8. Offers wilderness permits, trail information, books, and an exhibit on Thomas Hill. Located on the grounds of the Wawona Hotel. Walk from the hotel or park at the Wawona Store and follow the path up the hill. More info: 209/375-9531.

Yosemite Association Seminars
For more details and information on Yosemite Association’s seminars, pick up a catalog at any visitor center, call 209/379-2321, or visit www.yosemite.org.

Yosemite Association Seminars

Tuolumne Meadows
Yosemite Meadows Visitor Center
Opening date pending. When open, hours are 9 am to 5 pm.

Parsons Memorial Lodge, McCauley Cabin, and Soda Springs
Two trails, both flat and 3/4 mi. long, lead to this historic area.

Tuolumne Meadows Wilderness Center
The center is scheduled to open along with Tioga Road. Hours are 8 am to 4 pm, with a daily closure for lunch. This info and wilderness permit-dispensing office is located off Tioga Road, near the turnoff to Tuolumne Lodge.

Outdoor Adventures

Yosemite Association also offers individualized Custom Adventures for groups and families. Led by naturalists, the option lets you focus on your own area of interest. Info: 209/379-2321, ext. 12.
Keep yourself safe while exploring your park.

There are many ways to experience the wildness of Yosemite. While the forces of nature can create unexpected hazardous conditions, with a little common sense and some pre-planning, you can minimize the risks associated with many activities.

Traffic Safety
Roads leading to the park are two-lane, narrow, and winding. When traveling on park roads you can protect yourself, other visitors, and park wildlife by observing the following simple rules: Please obey posted speed limits. Yosemite’s roads are used by both visitors and park wildlife. Use turnouts to pull completely out of the road, to take photos, consult the park map, or simply enjoy the park’s scenery and wildlife.

Pack Water
Hydration is life. Avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion by carrying plenty of water. Filters or other treatment methods are essential. (See “Water Quality” at right.)

Effects of Altitude
Altitude sickness may develop in otherwise healthy and fit people who are exposed to rapid increases in altitude. It can develop at altitudes as low as 8,000 feet (Yosemite Valley’s elevation is 4,000 feet). The risk of occurrence increases with age and with diseases of the heart and lungs.

Symptoms include headache, nausea, insomnia, irritability, shortness of breath, general malaise and fatigue. The best way to avoid it is to slowly acclimatize yourself to higher elevations, over the span of two to three days by gradually gaining elevation until you reach 10,000 feet (Tuoga Pass). Avoid alcohol, sugar, and high-fat meals. Should altitude sickness develop, descend to a lower elevation. The Yosemite Medical Clinic in Yosemite Valley is experienced in diagnosing and treating this sickness.

Hiking, Backpacking, Rock Climbing and Scrambling
• Be honest about your abilities and plan with the least experienced member of your group in mind. Tell someone where you are going and when you are due back. Carry a signal mirror and whistle. Solo activities require increased precautions.
• Stay on designated trails and routes. Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
• Avoid scrambling in steep terrain or off-trail. If new to climbing, take a class to learn critical safety and protection techniques. Never climb alone.
• Check weather forecasts. Storms can occur with little warning. Snow is possible year-round at higher elevations, and can make route finding difficult. Temperature shifts are common.
• Avoid dehydration or heat exhaustion; carry and drink plenty of water, and bring high-energy food.
• Be prepared to set up emergency shelter even when out just for the day.
• Don’t depend on cell phone or GPS reception for your safety.

Water Safety
• Stay away from swiftly-moving water. Keep children from wandering on or near these hazards.
• Never swim or wade upstream from the brink of a waterfall, even if the water appears shallow and calm. Each year, unsuspecting visitors are swept over waterfalls to their deaths when swimming in these areas.

Water Quality
• Treatment methods include boiling for five minutes, use of a Giardia-rated water filter, or iodine-based purifier.
• To prevent the spread of Giardia and other water-borne disease organisms, use restroom facilities where available, and always wash hands afterwards with soap and water. In natural areas, wash, camp, and bury human waste (6 inches deep) at least 100 feet from water or trail.

Protect Yosemite’s Wilderness
• Free wilderness permits are required for all wilderness trips.
• Pack out all trash and toilet paper/ sanitary products.
• Pack out all trash and toilet paper/ sanitary products.
• Use gas stoves, not wood fires.
• Camp in an existing campsite at least 100 feet from water and trail. You must camp four trail miles from any populated area and one mile from any road.
• To minimize trampling of vegetation, bring a container to carry water to your camp from lakes or streams.
• Maximum group is 15 people for on-trail and eight for off-trail travel.

Wilderness Permits
Free permits are required for overnight trips. Permits are issued at Yosemite Valley, Big Oak Flat, Wawona, Tuolumne Meadows, and the Hetch Hetchy Entrance Station (opening times vary). You can reserve permits, but they must be picked up in person. Check the park’s website for trailhead availability and call 209/372-0740 to reserve a permit.

More Information
www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/backpacking.htm
Leave No Trace www.lnt.org
Friends of Yosemite Search and Rescue www.friendofyosar.org

Top left: Taft Point overlook. Photo by Wendy Malone
Top right: Theresa Ho on belay. Photo by Kenny Karst
The view from Glacier Point. Photo by Bethany Gediman
Protecting Yourself
Experience Yosemite—safely
**Protecting Your Park**

**Enjoy park places, plants, and wildlife safely and responsibly**

**Mountain Lions**

Mountain lions are a normal and important part of the park ecosystem. They are attracted to areas with healthy deer and raccoon populations, which include many areas of the park. Generally, they are calm, quiet, and elusive. Sightings are quite rare, so if you spot one, consider yourself privileged!

Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely and never let them run ahead or lag behind on the trail. Teach children what to do if they see a lion.

Never approach a lion, especially if it is with kittens. Most lions will avoid confrontation. Always give them a way to escape. Don’t run. Hold your ground, or back away slowly.

Face the lion and stand upright. Raise your arms. If you have small children with you, pick them up.

If the lion behaves aggressively, wave your arms, shout, and throw objects at it. The goal is to convince it that you may be dangerous. If attacked, fight back!

Report lion encounters at 209/372-0322.

**Permits and Other Rules**

To find out more about Yosemite National Park regulations visit www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/yoursafety.htm and find a copy of the Superintendent’s Compendium. This document is a compilation of designations, closures, permit requirements, and other restrictions made by the superintendent, in addition to what is contained in applicable federal statutes and regulations.

**Reporting Violations**

During your visit to Yosemite be aware that there are people who either unknowingly or intentionally harm park resources. Please contact a park official if you see the following illegal acts:

- Actively feeding or harassing wildlife
- Collecting plants, reptiles, or insects
- Hunting or directly harming animals
- Picking up archeological items such as arrowheads
- Using metal detectors to locate and collect historic objects
- Driving vehicles into meadows
- Camping outside of campgrounds
- Possession of weapons

If you see activities that could harm people or park resources, jot down any descriptions or a vehicle license plate number and call the park dispatch office at 209/379-1992.

**Fishing**

Trout season in Yosemite opens the last Saturday in April. A valid California sport-fishing license is required for anglers age 16 years and older. When fishing, the license must be plainly visible by attaching it to an outer layer of clothing above the waistline.

- Trout season opens on the last Saturday in April and continues through November 15 (except Frog Creek near Lake Eleanor, which opens June 15).
- Special fishing regulations apply on the Merced River in Yosemite Valley from Happy Isles downstream to the Foresta Bridge in El Portal. Within these reaches of the river, it is catch-and-release only for rainbow trout. Brown trout limits are five fish per day. Only artificial lures or flies with barbless hooks may be used.
- The use of live or dead minnows, bait fish or amphibians, non-preserved fish eggs or roe is prohibited.

**Water Quality**

To protect yourself from disease, treat any surface water before drinking.

- Treatment methods include boiling for five minutes, use of a Giardia-rated water filter, or iodine-based purifier.
- To prevent the spread of Giardia and other water-borne disease organisms, use restroom facilities where available, and always wash hands afterwards with soap and water. In natural areas where facilities are not available, wash, camp, and bury human waste (6 inches deep) at least 100 feet away from any water source or trail.

- Pets are only allowed in developed areas and on roads and paved bike paths. They are not allowed on other trails, or in wilderness areas.
- Pets must be on a leash (6 feet or less) or otherwise physically restrained.

**Bicycling**

Each season, plants are crushed from bicycle travel in meadows, campgrounds, and picnic areas. Please respect park resources and keep bicycles on paved roads and paved bicycle trails. They are not allowed to travel off-trail on dirt paths or trails.

- Pets are not allowed in any lodging facilities or other buildings within the park and are not allowed in some campgrounds.
- Pets may not be left unattended.

**Keeping Bears Wild**

Three Top Ways to Keep Yosemite's Black Bears Wild and Alive. Remember that Yosemite Bears are Active All Winter Long:

1. Store Your Food Properly.
   - “Food” includes any item with a scent, regardless of packaging. This may include items that you do not consider food, such as canned goods, bottles, drinks, soap, cosmetics, toiletries, trash, iced breads (even when empty), and unwashed items used for preparing or eating meals. Do not store food in your car after dark, use a food locker. Remember to clear your car of food wrappers, baby wipes, and crumbs in baby seats. If you are staying in a campsite or tent cabin, you must store all your food in food lockers. A food locker is available at each campsite and tent cabin. Food may be stored out of sight in hard-sided RV’s with windows closed. Do not leave food unattended at picnic areas and along trails. When backpacking in the wilderness, bear resistant food containers are required.

2. If you see a bear, scare it away or keep your distance.
   - You may not see a bear during your visit because they naturally avoid people. However, if you see one in a developed area (like a campground or parking lot), act immediately to scare it away: Make noise and yell as loud as possible. If there is more than one person, stand together to present a more intimidating figure, but do not surround the bear. If you see a bear anywhere else, consider yourself lucky—but keep your distance (at least 50 yards, or about the distance made by four shuttle buses parked end to end). If you get too close, you will be helping the bear become used to being around people.

3. Drive the speed limit.
   - The most common human-related cause of death for a black bear in Yosemite is being hit by a car. Please slow down!

To report bear sightings, improper food storage, trash problems, and other bear-related problems, leave a message for the Bear Management Team at 209/372-0322.
Spring is here, and Yosemite is coming alive again. Grass that has lain under snow is growing, and warm breezes lap around us like gentle waves. And Yosemite Falls, arguably the most recognizable waterfall in our national park system, turns from a feeble trickle to a roaring flood. The water that flows this time of year—from rivers, to waterfalls, to flooded wetland meadows, is crucial to the health of the overall ecosystem and the life that it promotes is obvious everywhere. Red-winged blackbirds, perched noisily on cow parsnip, guard their nests buried deep in the grasses while black bears, still groggy from their winter sleep, start the year with the tender grass shoots, and deer use it to conceal their spring-born fawns.

As the warm weather returns and the rivers rise, the temptation becomes strong to catch a snooze in a sunny meadow and dip hot feet into the meandering river after a long day of hiking. It’s at this time each year that the search and rescue staff slide into their neoprene wetsuits and get ready for the inevitable: when unsuspecting visitors meet icy waterways.

Speaking from experience

When asked about swiftwater incidents, longtime search and rescue team member John Dill explains: “If people felt the same fear standing at the edge of a river as they do standing on the edge of El Capitan, we wouldn’t see the same problems.” His meaning is clear: standing next to, or being in, Yosemite’s waterways can be as dangerous as taking that last step into thin air from thousands of feet up: OUCH!

About 20% of Yosemite’s search and rescue incidents are water-related, and after motor-vehicle accidents they are the leading cause of death in the park.

The bottom line is, don’t take chances with swiftwater.

By Ranger Adrienne Freeman

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Know the hazards

Mountain water is cold, even on a hot day. Even strong swimmers may quickly become too weak from hypothermia to swim. Moose Mutlow, swiftwater rescue instructor for Yosemite adds, “It’s a struggle even for rescuers to stay warm, and we have all the gear!”

Even a slow current will take you where you may not want to go. Slow currents have immense power. Even water that appears calm and inviting can be dangerous.

Watch for water hazards, like submerged tree branches, abandoned cables, or narrow gaps between rocks, which can trap you or part of you underwater. The pressure from even a “slow” current can be enough to immobilize you against an obstacle and keep you submerged. Keep in mind that if even your foot gets entrapped and the current forces you down, the water only has to be deep enough to submerge your nose and mouth!

Enjoy the river safely

Don’t underestimate the danger, or overestimate your own abilities: Confidence in a familiar environment can lead to danger in an unfamiliar one. For example, a strong ocean swimmer with no knowledge of swiftwater hazards might assume that their swimming skill is all they need. It’s not!

• Follow posted signs. If a sign says “NO SWIMMING,” don’t swim or wade! Hazards are often invisible on the surface and calm water may hide dangerous conditions. Areas are closed to swimming and wading in places (like Emerald Pool, above Vernal Fall) where multiple incidents occur each year. Additionally, launching a raft or boat out of the campgrounds may seem harmless, but a “No Launching” sign may actually be referring to dangerous conditions downstream.

• If you fall in, use the defensive swimming position: on your back, feet pointing downstream and on the surface (can you see your toes?).

• If you are boating or rafting, wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE): A life-jacket (personal floatation device or PFD) appropriate to the activity is the absolute minimum. Other equipment may include helmet, wetsuit, whistle, and knife.

Learn more about current conditions at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/conditions.htm

Yosemite Search and Rescue team members train in whitewater. Unfortunately, rescues and recovery operations take place every year. NPS photo by Adrienne Freeman

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Rescue team members depend on specialized gear to protect them. NPS photo by Adrienne Freeman
Supporting Your Park
Providing for Yosemite’s future

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

It takes a legion of people working together to protect this special park for you and future generations of visitors. You, too, can extend your connection to Yosemite well after you return home by getting involved with the organizations that partner to preserve Yosemite.

This publication was made possible by the Yosemite Park Partners listed on this page. Read more below or visit www.yosemitepartners.org to learn more about helping these organizations provide for the future of Yosemite National Park.

The Ansel Adams Gallery
The Ansel Adams Gallery, owned by the family of photographer Ansel Adams since 1902, is a center that celebrates the arts and the natural grandeur of our environment. It cultivates an aesthetic appreciation and concern for our world by offering visitors a unique variety of literature and art, as well as programs that inspire creativity. Visit online at www.anseladams.com.

DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite
DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite (DNC) operates hotels, restaurants, sightseeing tours, recreational activities, interpretive programs, stores, shuttles and service stations in the park under contract with the U.S. Department of the Interior. DNC encourages its employees to develop a strong relationship with the park during their tenure. For more information and employment opportunities with DNC at Yosemite, visit online at www.yosemitepark.com.

The Yosemite Association
The Yosemite Association is a nonprofit membership organization that provides opportunities for people to learn about, enjoy, and experience Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada. The Association celebrates the majesty and grandeur of this region through its visitor services, publications, outdoor classroom, and membership activities, which give people of all ages the chance to forge an enduring and inspirational connection to Yosemite. This, in turn, builds a commitment to the long-term preservation and vitality of Yosemite and our National Parks. Since 1923, the Association has provided important services and financial support to the National Park Service. Anyone who loves Yosemite and wishes to become more closely involved and affiliated with the park will enjoy membership in the Association. For more information, visit park bookstores or www.yosemite.org.

The Yosemite Fund
The Fund provides broad-based private funding from 27,000 members for projects that preserve, protect, or enhance Yosemite Park. Fund operations result in material improvement in the stewardship and quality of Yosemite’s natural, cultural or historical resources or the visitor experience. Fund grants repair trails, restore habitat, conduct scientific research, enhance visitor education, preserve park history, and protect wildlife. Since 1988 the Fund has provided over $50 million to complete more than 200 projects. Visit online at www.yosemitefund.org.

Yosemite Institute
Since 1971, thousands of school-age children have benefited from learning in “nature’s classroom” through the residential field-science programs offered by Yosemite Institute (YI). A YI experience strives to foster a life-long connection to the natural world—whether it is in Yosemite, on a city street or in our own backyards. YI also offers professional development for teachers, summer youth programs, backpacking adventures, community outreach programs and service learning projects. For more information, visit www.yi.org/yi.