



YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY

2020 Annual Report

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OUR MISSION

We inspire people to support projects and programs that preserve Yosemite and enrich the visitor experience for all people.

Providing For Yosemite's Future



Your Gifts at Work

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Life in Yosemite — as everywhere — looked different in 2020. One exception: Your generosity and love for the park, which helped us provide **\$14 million** in total support to Yosemite last year. Thanks to you, more than three dozen grant-funded projects moved forward, and the Conservancy and NPS adapted visitor programs and services to keep people safe and engaged during the pandemic.

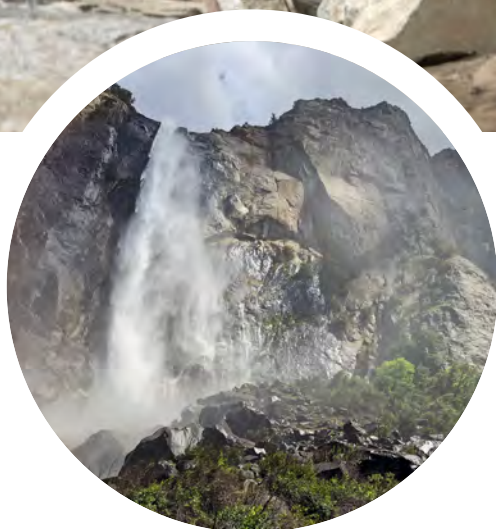
While a handful of 2020 projects had to be postponed, most forged ahead — some as planned, some with modifications, and all with significant benefits for the park. In the Valley, donor-supported **peregrine surveys** revealed 15 active falcon nests on Yosemite's cliffs and domes, including in several areas where they hadn't been seen before. **The Yosemite Bike Share**, based in Yosemite Village, expanded its free services and proved especially popular while shuttles were off-limits for the summer.

In the park's southwestern corner, crews added an **automated gate** that will help visitors with ADA placards access Mariposa Grove, and installed 61 new **food lockers** in Wawona Campground, an upgrade that helps protect bears and other wildlife while ensuring campers have adequate space to store scented items. And throughout the park, short-staffed but industrious crews stepped up to the challenge of restoring backcountry campsites, trails and meadow habitat.

Meanwhile, in the digital realm, the park and its partners embraced online outreach, transforming in-person activities, including the **Parsons Memorial Lodge Summer Series**, into virtual experiences that people could take in from home. Behind the scenes, park staff facilitated translations of a variety of informational materials, to better serve visitors who speak Spanish, Mandarin and other languages, and started filming a new orientation video.

And throughout the year, the Conservancy team and our partners in the NPS adapted to rapidly shifting conditions, embraced new responsibilities and priorities, and worked together to make sure Yosemite's future remains bright, even in what can feel like a cloudy present.

These highlights capture just some of the ways you made a difference in Yosemite in 2020. To learn more about how your support and participation helps the park, visit yosemite.org/impact.



With your support, progress continued on two major projects in Yosemite Valley. Crews worked on shaping a new trail system at the base of **Bridalveil Fall**, a stunning natural feature and popular stopping point on the south side of the Valley, as part of a multiyear restoration project. Meanwhile, a collaborative team worked through planning phases for the new **Welcome Center** in Yosemite Village, which will offer visitors an inviting place to gather, learn and plan itineraries in a spacious interior (in a refurbished building) and outdoor plaza.



PHOTOS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) © NPS/AL GOLUB. © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY/SCHUYLER GREENLEAF. © RHAA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS.



COVID didn't dampen the draw of Yosemite's big walls and polished domes — nor the need to take care of the **vertical wilderness**. Climbing rangers and "Climber Stewards," a small group of volunteers who support climbing-focused restoration and education in Yosemite, restored access trails for routes in Tuolumne Meadows and Yosemite Valley; tidied up the top of El Capitan, by removing abandoned gear and fire rings; and embraced opportunities to connect with the climbing community, and the climbing-curious, online.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK



For the 2020 summer season, **Preventive Search and Rescue (PSAR)** operations were concentrated on the busy Mist and John Muir trails, where the PSAR team, which included NPS rangers and Conservancy naturalists and program staff, could share safety messages with hikers en route to Vernal Fall, Nevada Fall and Half Dome.

In addition to the usual suggestions – stay hydrated, stay away from swift water, take breaks – last year's PSAR guidance included COVID-specific instructions for following a one-way route to reduce crowding on a popular stretch of trail. Along with interacting with more than 10,000 visitors in person, the PSAR team produced seasonal signs and online content with up-to-date safety tips, and trained staff on COVID-safe EMS procedures.



Many indoor spaces in Yosemite were closed in 2020, but that didn't stop our bookstore team from making sure visitors could find top-notch products in the park. We got creative with a **walk-up window at the Valley Visitor Center**, where people could purchase books, apparel and other items safely. In the digital realm, we successfully launched an online version of the **Yosemite Museum Store**, featuring jewelry, baskets and other Native American crafts and art.



PHOTOS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) © ELSBETH OTTO. © JOSH HELLING. © COURTESY OF NPS.



You helped fund the continuation of critical wildlife work throughout the park last year.

- With your support, scientists monitoring **Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep** confirmed the presence of more than 70 of the endangered alpine mammals in Yosemite-area herds and collected ovine droppings for genetic analysis.
- Researchers working to restore Yosemite's population of endangered **Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs** released more than 200 of the amphibians in high country lakes and transported hundreds of tadpoles to the San Francisco Zoo, where they'll grow safely in a special amphibian facility before returning to the park.
- "Carnivore crew" members, including scent dogs, covered hundreds of square miles in the Yosemite Wilderness, collected more than 2,000 scat samples and gathered thousands of snapshots from remote wildlife cameras as they sought signs of two elusive species — **mountain lion** and **Sierra Nevada red fox**.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

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Two emblems of Yosemite's early days as a national park got some attention in 2020. In Yosemite Village, historic preservation experts restored a central fireplace in the 100-year-old **Rangers' Club**, the iconic rustic building that inaugural NPS Director Stephen Mather had personally funded to provide housing for park rangers. Another donor-funded grant enabled the park to add six mules and two horses to Yosemite's crew of "four-legged rangers," and to run a weeklong mounted patrol training program.



PHOTO: © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY/RYAN KELLY.



PHOTO: © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY/SCHUYLER GREENLEAF.

Several donor-funded exhibits exploring elements of Yosemite's past and present took shape in 2020.

- With the Yosemite Museum closed due to the pandemic, park curators created an online "**Yosemite Women**" exhibit; an in-person version of that exhibit will be on display at The Ahwahnee in 2021.
 - An exhibit **on climbing history, culture and stewardship** was installed in the Valley Visitor Center — the building remains closed for now, but you can see a preview of that new educational resource in our November 2020 magazine.
 - At the **Valley Wilderness Center**, new displays (pictured above) designed with your support in 2020 are now up on the walls, offering a fresh take on the many ways people can experience Yosemite's backcountry.
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Most in-person education programs were canceled in 2020, but that made it a great year for independent learning! Thanks to your support, rangers were able to create a series of innovative **pop-up programs** designed to let visitors explore at their own pace. At least 14,475 visitors participated in the 2020 pop-up programs, which invited people to write postcards, make art, and learn about watersheds, glaciers and bears, and more. Rangers look forward to continue offering informal, self-guided activities throughout the park in 2021 and beyond.

PHOTO: © COURTESY OF NPS.





PHOTO: © COURTESY OF ARC.

Thanks to you, experiential **Yosemite-based youth programs** were able to adapt to the pandemic in a variety of ways to keep students connected to the park from afar. Kids learned about nature through ranger-led online videos and completed **Junior Ranger** activities — and earned their Yosemite badges — from home. Other programs, such as **WildLink** and the UC-Merced-based **Yosemite Leadership Program**, shifted online, too, with web-based curricula and close-to-home stewardship projects.

Meanwhile, **Adventure Risk Challenge** adapted its immersive Sierra Nevada summer course with strict COVID-safety protocols, creating a safe “bubble” that allowed eight high school students to complete the monthlong July program, which culminated with a live-streamed “Voices of Youth” poetry reading.

With your support, crews worked to restore **meadow and wetland ecosystems** in Yosemite Valley. Near Lower River Amphitheater, they installed a raised boardwalk and sowed more than 500 native seedlings; at Yellow Pine Campground, they removed conifer trees that were threatening to crowd out wetland habitat. Elsewhere in the Valley, local volunteers, a CHIPS (Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions) crew of Yosemite-area tribal members, and NPS staff worked together to sow 6,000 pollinator-friendly plants and collect seeds for future revegetation efforts.



PHOTO: © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY/RYAN KELLY.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK



Behind the scenes, the Conservancy team worked in partnership with the NPS to create a new **Junior Ranger handbook**. The new resource, which was released in early 2021 and is now available for purchase online and in Yosemite, offers an array of fun activities for kids (and kids-at-heart) to complete as they earn Junior Ranger badges, and features illustrations that showcase the diversity of park visitors.



PHOTO: © MIKE ASHTON.

When the pandemic prompted an unexpected shift to an **all-digital wilderness permit** process in 2020, the Conservancy team jumped into action to build and manage a system that could handle the higher volume of online permit requests.

Behind the scenes, several of our park-based team members embraced new responsibilities, quickly learning the ins and outs of the system so they could support the near-constant flow of permit applications. Overall, we processed 149,105 requests (a 24% increase from 2019), enabling thousands of people to enjoy Yosemite Wilderness during a year when recharging outside seemed even more worthwhile than usual.

The **Yosemite Bike Share** wrapped up its third season in 2020! This program, which Conservancy donors have supported since it launched in 2018, has grown in popularity and scale each season. Last year, the bike share team expanded the fleet to 40 bikes, hired two seasonal employees to oversee day-to-day operations, relocated bike pick-up/drop-off sites to more central areas, and implemented COVID-related safety and sanitization procedures.

PHOTO: © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK



PHOTO: © FRED TURNER.

While we had to cancel many of the Conservancy's in-person activities in 2020, including donor events, art classes, theater shows and volunteer programs, we were grateful to be able to offer a variety of **outdoor experiences with our unstoppable naturalist guides**, including backpacking trips, day hikes, stargazing programs, and storytelling evenings. We also loved **connecting with Yosemite fans online**, through art tutorials, naturalist videos and virtual events.

For the **2021 season**, we're excited to welcome visitors back for outdoor art classes, volunteer programs, Outdoor Adventures and Custom Adventures in the park, and we look forward to continuing to host virtual activities and share videos. To stay up on the latest news about our activities in the park and online, sign up for our newsletter and follow us on social media (we're active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn).



Statement of Financial Position

As of Dec. 31, 2020

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash & Investments	\$22,498,101
Pledges, Receivables & Other Assets	\$1,621,377

Total Current Assets \$24,119,478

Pledges Receivable, Net of Current Portion	\$79,481
Deposits	\$14,500
Land Held for Future Use	\$3,360,317
Investments, Net of Current Portion	\$5,360,331
Charitable Gift Annuities	\$120,069
Property & Equipment, Net	\$839,106

Total Noncurrent Assets \$9,773,804

TOTAL ASSETS \$33,893,282

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$942,966
Grants Payable to Yosemite National Park	\$3,620,541

Total Current Liabilities \$4,563,507

NET ASSETS

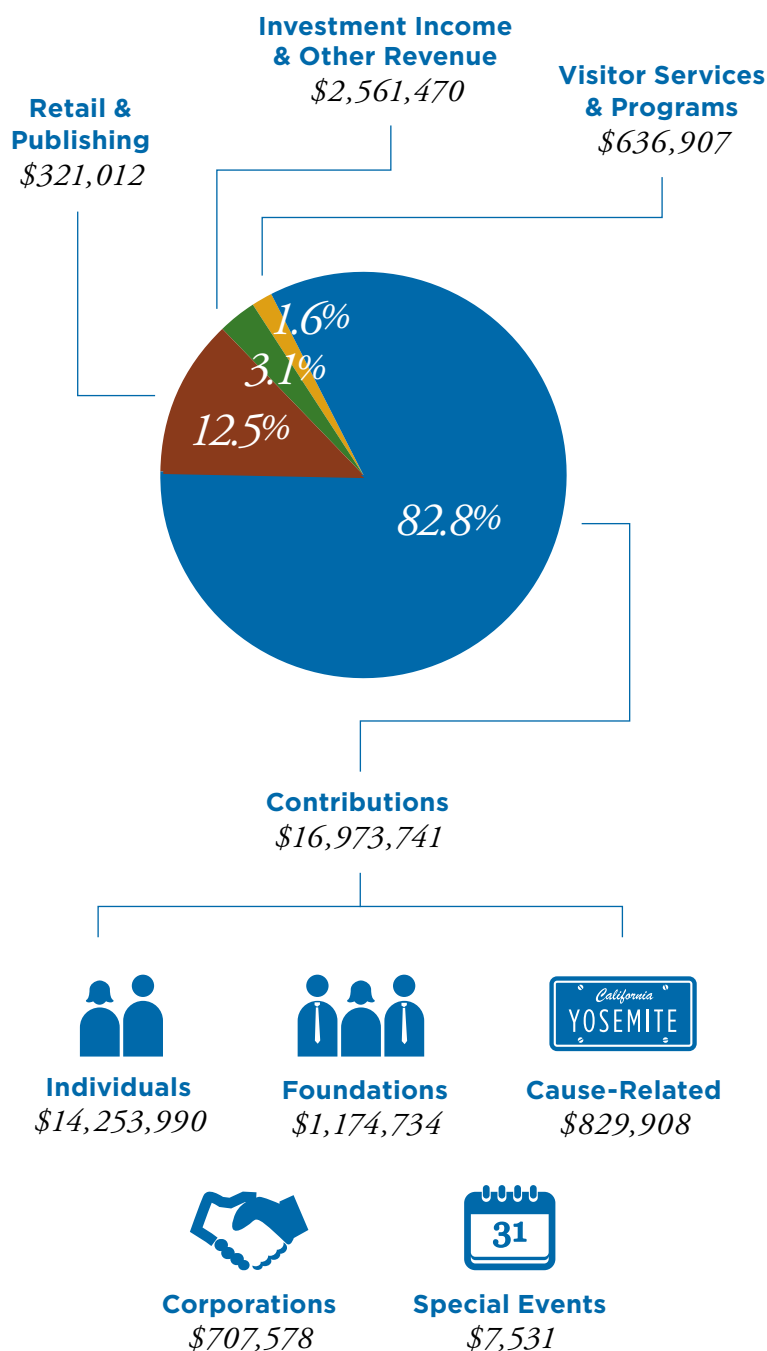
Without Donor Restrictions	\$20,854,530
With Donor Restrictions	\$8,475,245

Total Net Assets \$29,329,775

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$33,893,282

Support & Revenue

\$20,493,130



Statement of Activities

As of Dec. 31, 2020

SUPPORT & REVENUE

Contributions	\$16,973,741
Retail & Publishing	\$321,012
Visitor Services & Programs	\$636,907
Investment Income & Other Revenue	\$2,561,470

TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE \$20,493,130

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Program Services

Park Enhancements	\$10,519,069
Retail & Publishing	\$981,504
Visitor Services & Programs	\$2,481,114

Total Aid to Park \$13,981,687

Support Services

Administrative	\$1,330,413
Fundraising	\$2,562,974

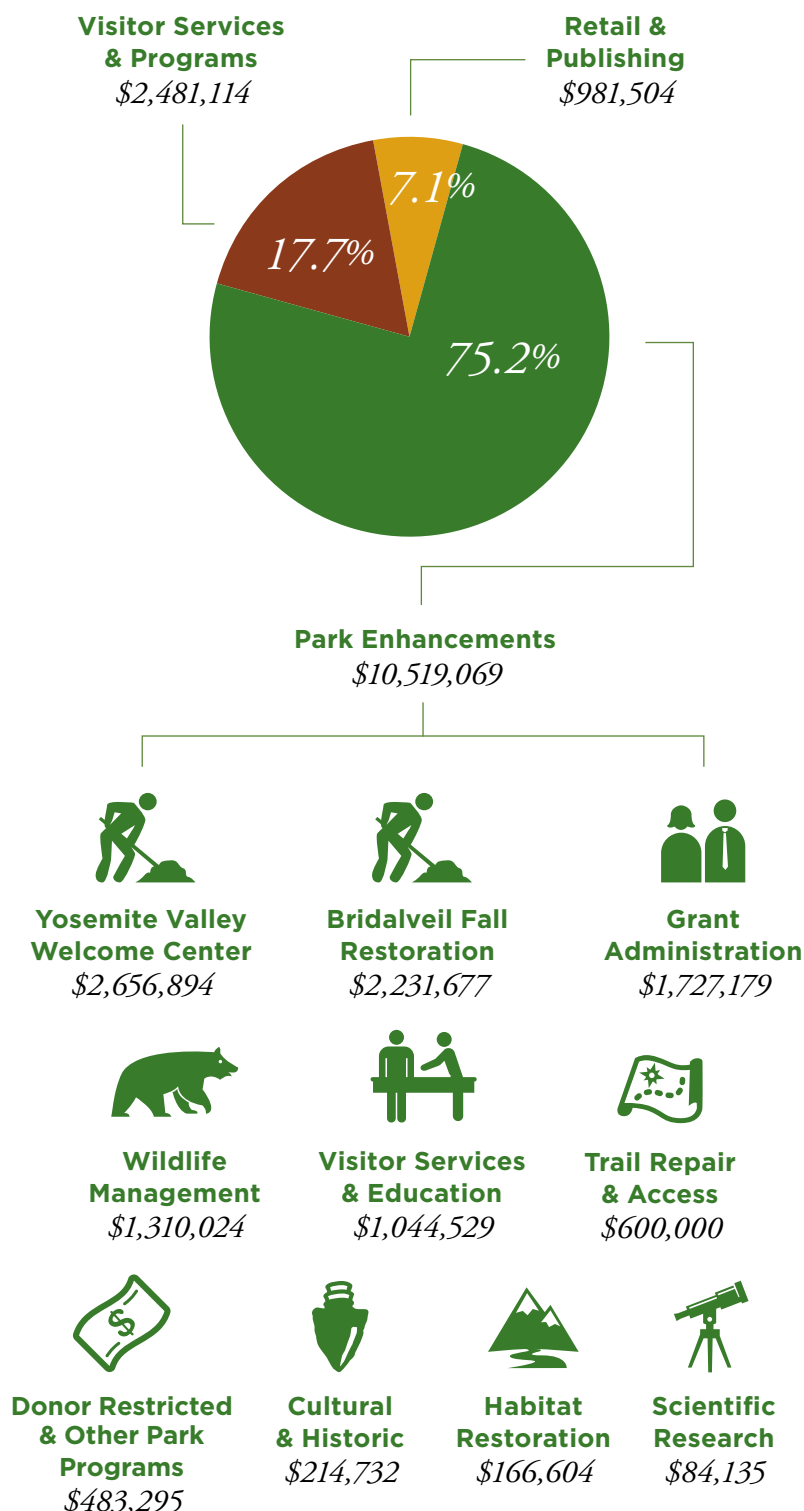
TOTAL EXPENSES \$17,875,074

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS \$2,618,056

NET ASSETS

Beginning of Year	\$26,711,719
End of Year	\$29,329,775

Aid to Yosemite National Park \$13,981,687





“Our appreciation of Yosemite began in the 1980s, and we fell in love with it when we returned in 2009. Since then, we have climbed Half Dome, Yosemite Falls and many others multiple times. Our daughter even got engaged on the top of Yosemite Falls! We fell in love with Mariposa Grove — the majesty, age and scale of the giant sequoias is intoxicating. As our interest in Yosemite has grown, so has our desire to see it preserved and flourish into the future. We feel Yosemite Conservancy is the best way to do just that. Our family is looking forward to many years of enjoyment in the area.”

— **ANDY & MARIA PECOTA**
John Muir Heritage Society donor

“Yosemite has always had a special place in our hearts, we have so many amazing memories. As a child, Barb camped with her family at the Lower River Campground, which is no longer there, and remembers singing campfire songs at Camp Curry and watching the Fire Fall from Glacier Point. We brought our children to camp, bike and raft down the river. We contribute to Yosemite Conservancy because we want to preserve the wonders of Yosemite for generations to come.”

— **HERB & BARB YUKI**
John Muir Heritage Society donor



“Yosemite endures, and we are all just passing through.”

— **PETE DEVINE**
Yosemite Conservancy Lead Naturalist,
from 1971-2021

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As of Dec. 31, 2020

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Dana Dornsife*

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Steve Ciesinski*

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent Cicely Muldoon

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PHOTO: © CAROLYN BOTELL

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