



Yosemite Conservancy News Release

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Yosemite Conservancy Marks 100 Years of Support to Yosemite National Park with \$17 Million

Safety Improvements to the Popular Mist Trail, Bat Studies and Efforts to Protect Giants Sequoias are Among 50 Projects Funded in 2023

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, May 22, 2023 – A century of support to Yosemite National Park by the nonprofit Yosemite Conservancy continued with the announcement of \$17 million in total support in 2023 to restore trails and ecosystems, propel scientific and historical research, protect wildlife, and facilitate positive visitor experiences.

“Philanthropy’s vital role in supporting national parks stems from the inspiration and success of the nation’s first friends’ group, Yosemite Conservancy,” said **Yosemite National Park Superintendent Cicely Muldoon**. “Yosemite National Park has benefited immensely from a century of partnership with the Conservancy. The work we do together has restored access to some of the park’s most iconic landmarks and funded research to preserve some of its most at-risk species. Every visitor’s experience to Yosemite has been made better by the Conservancy’s work. We look forward to the next 100 years, and what we can do together to steward Yosemite for future generations.”

“Donors play an essential role in funding high-priority work in the park. The massive water flows from winter runoff creating a symphony of ephemeral falls ringing Yosemite Valley are a thundering reminder of how special this place is and how important it is to protect one of the world’s irreplaceable natural treasures,” said **Yosemite Conservancy President Frank Dean**.

This year, grants will support around 50 projects, programs and services. Among them are initiatives to improve safety along the popular Mist Trail, understand threats to giant sequoias and conduct research to uncover why park salamander, bat and Pacific fisher populations are dwindling.

Dean said upgrades to the Mist Trail are overdue on a route used by an average of 3,000 hikers a day.

“This is one of the most popular trails in the entire National Parks system and one of its most spectacular,” said Dean. “Trails are the best way to explore Yosemite’s breathtaking landscape — whether you’re climbing through the spray along the Mist Trail, taking a stroll in a quiet forest or trekking over mountain passes.”

The Mist Trail winds along the Merced River and up steep, wet paths to the spray zone of Vernal Fall and provides breathtaking views of Glacier Point, Nevada Fall and Half Dome. Over multiple years, there will be improvements to the trails, new signage aimed at reducing injuries and better navigating the trail, and better viewing areas below of Vernal Falls. The work will also elevate Tribal perspectives along the route, add footbridges and improve ADA accessibility in the greater Happy Isles trail system.

Other grants will support the park's Junior Ranger programming, the popular "Ask a Climber" program and documenting Chinese-American history in the park. Funding also will allow for continuing analysis of how drought, fire and insect attacks are impacting giant sequoias.

Dean noted that 2023 will mark the completion of major visitor improvement projects funded by the Conservancy. Next month, a new Welcome Center will open in Yosemite Valley. Later in the year, access reopen to the area around the 620-foot Bridalveil Fall — the iconic fall photographed by millions from Tunnel View — following major improvements to its trails, viewing areas, parking area and visitor amenities.

"All of this work demonstrates how our productive partnership with the National Park Service results in positive change in the park to benefit future generations," Dean said.

The Conservancy's contributions now top out at more than \$152 million and around 800 completed Conservancy-funded projects since the organization began 100 years ago in 1923. Notable projects include the restoration and protection the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, renovated overlooks such as Tunnel View, Olmsted Point, lower Yosemite Fall and Glacier Point, restored meadows in Yosemite Valley and the high country, and protecting peregrine falcons, red-legged frogs and Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep.

The Conservancy also supports the park through a variety of visitor programs and retail operations, including by offering naturalist-led outdoor adventures, art classes and volunteer programs; operating physical bookstores in the park and an online store; and managing the online wilderness permit reservation process. The Conservancy's four webcams, which show El Capitan, Half Dome, the High Sierra and Yosemite Falls, help people connect with the park from afar.

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Photo Captions ([Link to Photos](#))

1. Yosemite Conservancy is funding efforts to improve the Mist Trail, an iconic Yosemite hike that takes visitors up the Merced River past Vernal Fall, seen here, and Nevada Fall. Credit: Yosemite Conservancy.
2. Hikers are able to take the Mist Trail to look over the top of Vernal Fall. In 2023, Yosemite Conservancy donors are funding efforts to improve Mist Trail, understand threats to giant sequoias and conduct research to uncover why park salamander, bat and Pacific fisher populations are dwindling.