

Director of Wilderness Operations

Position type: Full-time, Exempt

Reports to: Chief of Yosemite Operations

Location: Yosemite Valley / Yosemite National Park

Yosemite Conservancy Wilderness Operations team partners directly with the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Branch to manage the Wilderness Permit Reservation System on Recreation.gov. The Director of Wilderness Operations is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the permit reservation system that the Conservancy manages on behalf of Yosemite National Park. Fielding over 50,000 reservation requests annually requires someone with a keen sense of efficiency, an alacrity with technology, and the ability to manage a staff of operations assistants to their maximum potential, all while keeping the inspiration of Yosemite's Wilderness at the heart of the matter.

The Director oversees a team that offers high quality wilderness education and trip planning to visitors by conducting a thorough permit reservation review process, staffing a public assistance phone line, answering online help desk queries, issuing wilderness permits, maintaining the Bear Canister Rental Program, communicating vital information regarding current conditions and road or trail closures, and assisting wilderness operations more broadly, including scheduled time patrolling and working in wilderness areas.

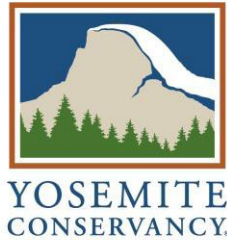
This role partners directly with NPS Wilderness managers and staff to ensure the wilderness permit program offers the highest level of customer service and care along with sound wilderness trip planning guidance. This includes a working knowledge of Yosemite Wilderness and Wilderness Regulations. This position also oversees all operations for the Ostrander Ski Hut and the Bear Cannister Rental Program.

The Director of Wilderness Operations is responsible for departmental budgeting, planning, hiring, training, managing up to 8 staff members, all technology and reservation systems, as well as metric and fee reporting for these operations. This position is based out of the Yosemite Valley Wilderness Center and Yosemite Conservancy's El Portal Office.

This role works closely with many National Park Service (NPS) Wilderness Rangers where a supportive team-oriented culture is essential to our collective success. Our goal is to facilitate an exceptional wilderness experience for the visitor while balancing their safety and enjoyment with the protection of fragile wilderness resources.

Who We Are

We are passionate about Yosemite — and about helping all people connect with, learn about, and take care of the park. As a member of the Conservancy team, you will be making a difference for Yosemite every day. We work together to provide enriching visitor programs and services, and to support projects that protect wildlife, restore trails and habitat, advance scientific research, inspire visitors, and much more.



What You will Do

The Director of Wilderness Operations reports to the Chief of Yosemite Operations and is responsible for the following:

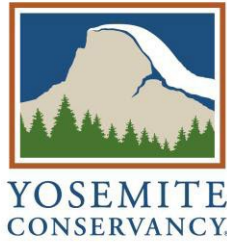
- Assist with annual planning and budgeting for all Wilderness Programs.
- Oversee all program revenue reporting and analysis.
- Operate and make improvements to Recreation.gov Wilderness Permitting System.
- Hire, train and manage staff, prepare schedules, perform employee evaluations.
- Manage all staff to provide top-tier wilderness permit reservation information to visitors.
- Orchestrate all required paperwork for staff access to government computer usage.
- Host and facilitate seasonal meetings and trainings.
- Organize the seasonal opening and closing of the Valley Wilderness Center and Reservation Office.
- Manage and often perform clerical duties associated with the daily operation of the Wilderness Permit Reservation System and the Wilderness Center, including public contact, answering telephones and written correspondence and POS troubleshooting.
- Provide information and seasonal updates for the website in coordination with marketing.
- Manage the operation of Ostrander Ski Hut located in a remote setting.
- Maintain and improve the online Ostrander Hut Reservation System.
- Onboard and train seasonal Ski Hutkeepers.
- Orchestrate mule packing for all supplies, firewood, and propane for ski hut.
- Work closely with NPS partners for proper maintenance and operation of the hut.
- Oversee Bear Cannister inventory and rental agreement system in park-wide locations.
- Revise Bear Canister Rental Agreement Forms and Canister Procedures Documents.
- Personally understand and train YC and NPS staff in Shopify point of sales system for wilderness retail sale items.
- Coordinate with NPS Bear Canister Seasonal Employee to create monthly and end of season reports.
- Maintain cannister inventory. Charge and file appropriate paperwork for overdue, lost, and late canisters.

Who You Are / Keys to Success (the must-haves)

To be successful in this job, you will excel in these areas:

Hard skills:

- Demonstrated ability to implement a range of operations and logistics.
- Technologically facile with strong office administration, computer skills, and ability to work with new software and technology.
- Excellent multi-year working knowledge of Yosemite National Park Wilderness and Wilderness Regulations including trails, routes, and travel.
- Highly competent at traveling in a wilderness setting in a self-reliant manner with the ability to educate others in how to do so.
- Ability to master Recreation.gov, Shopify, and Microsoft Suite.
- Valid Driver's license



Soft skills:

- Commitment to the mission, values, goals, and success of the Yosemite Conservancy and to advancing a culture of inclusion in the organization and in Yosemite.
- Ability to work independently and in a group setting.
- Excellent communication and relationship skills with a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
- Work in an organized manner and have good multitasking and analytical skills, including a penchant for highly detailed processes.
- Ability to defuse difficult situations with a calm, empathetic demeanor while also creating an environment where dissatisfied visitors or employees feel heard and supported.
- Collaborative, creative, and flexible with a sense of humor.
- Able to prioritize and act quickly and thoughtfully on the myriad of logistical challenges that are endemic to working in Yosemite National Park.
- Highly independent, self-starter who displays initiative in taking on new projects.
- Creative thinker and open-minded problem solver with a calm and flexible demeanor.
- A genuine care and love of wilderness and the desire to share this joy with others.

The following are plusses, but not requirements:

- H.S. diploma required/college degree preferred.

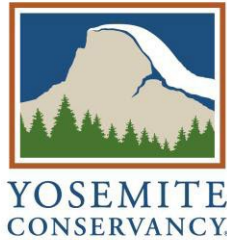
Working Conditions

- Primarily desk-/computer-based, with regular meetings (in person, or via video or phone).
- Meeting and collaborating with a variety of NPS and Yosemite Conservancy employees.
- Occasional outdoor work in a wilderness setting moving over uneven ground in an untamed outdoor environment.
- Lift, carry, and position objects weighing up to 30 pounds when moving supplies.

What Else You Should Know

We value diversity among our staff just as we value it among park visitors. As such, Yosemite Conservancy is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage people of all backgrounds to apply to join our team.

This is a year-round exempt position with a salary range of \$70,000-\$75,000. This is primarily an in-person job at the Wilderness Center in Yosemite Valley, with options for some work at the Conservancy's main office in El Portal. Housing in Old El Portal is available for this position.



We also offer excellent benefits, including:

- 11 annual holidays and 2 floating personal days
- 100% paid premiums for employee health insurance
- vision and dental insurance
- basic life insurance
- vacation and sick leave
- retirement program and contribution (following one year of employment)
- annual National Parks pass
- and more

How to Apply

Submit cover letter, resume, and three references, as well as answers to the prompt below to aripple@yosemite.org in a single PDF. The deadline for application materials is August 12, 2025.

Prompt: To get a sense of your writing style, please provide email responses to the following three Help Desk queries. Emphasize your pithiness, helpfulness and show-off your understanding of wilderness regulations. Remember, you will be answering dozens of these each day, so in most cases, the more succinct the better, but do show off your writing style.

Here are some helpful links to aid your response:

- [Wilderness Half Dome Regulations](#)
- [How will the Donohue Pass exit quota work?](#)

Question 1:

Name = Kathryn Janeway

Email = RestoreHalfDome@hiker.net

Message = I am confused by the new permitting system for Half Dome. I used to be able to request a Half Dome permit in my wilderness application, now there is no mention of it. I am happy to hike Half Dome in a day or overnight! Can you please explain it to me?

Reply:

Question 2:

Name = Benjamin Sisko

Email = JMTorBust@hiker.net

Message = I was turned down to hike the JMT this summer with my Happy Isles to Little Yosemite Valley permit! I thought the JMT started at Happy Isles. Can you help me with this?

Reply: