

YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY

AUTUMN.WINTER 2014 :: VOLUME 05.ISSUE 02

Restoring the **Mariposa Grove** of Giant Sequoias

INSIDE

Protecting Ancient Giants

A Close-Up Look at Life Among the Sequoias

Expert Insights on Hydrology in Mariposa Grove

Q&A with a Giant Sequoia Insider



**YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY**

Providing For Yosemite's Future

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Providing for Yosemite's future is our passion. We inspire people to support projects and programs that preserve and protect Yosemite National Park's resources and enrich the visitor experience.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



The Restoration of Mariposa Grove

This summer, the National Park Service, Yosemite Conservancy and our donors celebrated the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Yosemite Grant Act with a beautiful ceremony in the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. As we stood under the towering trees, I reflected on the awe-inspiring foresight of President Lincoln, who, during the depths of the Civil War, set aside Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley for all people, for all time. As a Conservancy donor, you are part of this legacy of preservation.

We're devoting this issue to the restoration of Mariposa Grove, an enduring symbol of the national park movement and of your dedication to protecting our cherished natural resources. This landmark project will restore giant sequoia habitat, while improving your experience with these ancient trees. From an expert perspective on water flow, to a peek at creatures in the Grove, to one ranger's lifelong love of telling the sequoias' stories, we are excited to bring you the vibrant tales behind the restoration — and share your important role in making it possible.

Other highlights in this issue include how you can explore Yosemite's winter wonderland with our Outdoor Adventures and how technology is strengthening connections to the park. Learn how your gifts are funding a sustainable network of climber-access trails, rehabilitating a popular picnic area and helping young people steward Yosemite.

Your heartfelt dedication means valuable places such as Mariposa Grove will continue to be protected for future generations to enjoy and admire. Thank you for your support.

See you in the park,

Mike

Mike Tollefson, President

COVER PHOTO A visitor enjoys a moment with the giant sequoias of Mariposa Grove.

PHOTO: © NANCY ROBBINS.



We are now on Pinterest! Follow our Yosemite Conservancy boards, and stay connected to the park.





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PROTECTING

Ancient

RESTORING THE MARIPOSA GROVE
OF GIANT SEQUOIAS

ABOVE With the help of Conservancy donors, the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is protected and preserved for all to enjoy.

Like silent sentinels, the giant sequoias in the Mariposa Grove have kept watch through millennia, gracefully bearing the scars of lightning, wildfires and snowstorms. Their towering branches and majestic tree trunks have provided refuge for countless animal and plant species through the ages. These trees have witnessed the rise and fall of human civilizations and serve as visible reminders of our relatively fleeting presence. By standing in their shadow, we sense we are part of something larger — and it is impossible to not be awed by these giants.

Some 500 giant sequoias make up the Mariposa Grove, set aside with Yosemite Valley 150 years ago, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Grant Act. Some individual trees are estimated to be approximately 3,000 years old. While they spent thousands of years undisturbed, the past century and a half of human development has taken its toll on the Grove's fragile ecosystem.

Conservancy donors are continuing President Lincoln's legacy

of conservation by funding a multiyear project in Mariposa Grove to restore giant sequoia habitat, while providing visitors with a more welcoming experience as they walk among these ancient guardians of Yosemite. The restoration is badly needed to return this ecosystem back to health. Roads and parking areas, built in the 1930s before the intricacies of sequoia-forest ecology were fully understood, are severely affecting the Grove's hydrology, vegetation and wildlife. Extensive infrastructure and hard asphalt roads pose a threat to the trees' shallow root systems, which may extend more than 200-feet wide but are located only 4–5 feet below the soil surface.

"The health of the giant trees is compromised by a wide range of factors," says Kimball Koch, a Yosemite landscape architect. "The location of the existing parking lot, combined with the influx of millions of visitors, has exposed giant sequoia roots, which threatens the longevity of these trees."

The restoration will also include a major overhaul of visitor amenities. Early Grove tourists disembarked from their

Giants

RIGHT Artist's rendering of an accessible boardwalk over restored wetlands.

stage coaches amid a serene forest of ancient trees. Sadly, this experience has been lost, and today's visitors arrive to a crowded and noisy parking lot. Aging restrooms and inadequate signage further contribute to confusion and discomfort — hardly an appropriate welcome to the stately home of thousand-year-old giants.

To reverse many of the detrimental effects of development, the National Park Service has approved an ambitious \$36 million improvement plan for the Mariposa Grove, funded by \$16 million from the park service and \$20 million in private contributions from Conservancy donors. The restoration plan will relocate the parking area in the lower Grove, opening the forest to regeneration and allowing for the creation of a universally accessible trail.

This much-needed new trail in the lower Grove will greatly enhance access and allow people of all abilities to admire the giant sequoias — including the famed Grizzly Giant — without affecting fragile habitat.

➤ *continued on p. 29*



“Visitors will be able to walk among the trees and experience living history in a cathedral-like setting.”

— **MIKE TOLLEFSON**
Yosemite Conservancy President



FOREST SANCTUARY

*Wildlife Find Refuge
in Mariposa Grove*

The stately and serene majesty of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias instills a sense of wonder for all who visit. Not only is the ancient Grove a place for visitors to experience one of the largest living things on earth, but it also provides a haven for many threatened wildlife species, including the Pacific fisher, California spotted owl and pallid bat.

Thanks to support from Conservancy donors, the Mariposa Grove is undergoing a multiyear restoration project to ensure the longevity of giant sequoia habitat and the animals that make their home here. As part of the restoration, wildlife biologists are closely monitoring animal populations that live within the Grove to ensure the giant sequoia forest provides a healthy ecosystem for these rare and threatened species. The restoration ➤

will also provide better opportunities for visitors to observe these unique animals in their natural setting.

“The Mariposa Grove is not just a sanctuary for people; it’s also an important refuge for a diverse assemblage of animals that rely on the Grove’s protected status,” says Sarah Stock, a wildlife biologist in Yosemite National Park.

The Pacific fisher is one of the threatened species that finds refuge in the protected Grove. Camera surveys have confirmed Mariposa Grove represents extremely important habitat for the fisher, as well as a crucial migration corridor for their potential northward expansion through the park. Conservancy–donor funding contributed to the first successful identification of a fisher den in Yosemite and provided for the installation of road-crossing structures to facilitate animal movement along critical riparian corridors. The relocation of the Grove’s parking area will benefit the Pacific fisher by restoring the area to natural conditions and providing improved habitat for this sensitive species.

“Donor funding increases viability and biodiversity of Yosemite’s wildlife,” Stock says. “The restoration of Mariposa Grove is helping animals such as the Pacific fisher by protecting and enhancing habitat, reducing vehicle traffic and planning for visitor services in areas that avoid sensitive habitat.”

Many unique species of birds and bats also depend on the Grove’s ecosystem. For example, the California spotted owl has been designated as a special-status species due to widespread decline throughout its range. Scientists believe a

Protected areas such as Mariposa Grove provide holistic ecosystems that sustain Yosemite’s unique and irreplaceable wildlife.

“source” population exists in Yosemite and could constitute one of the last strongholds for this species as it faces ongoing habitat loss outside park boundaries. The pallid bat, another special-status species, usually goes unseen by most visitors due to its nocturnal lifestyle, but it constitutes an important link in the Grove’s ecology by preying on large, flightless species, such as scorpions, crickets and beetles. The fire-scarred hollows of giant sequoia trees provide an excellent roosting habitat for this unique bat.

Protected areas, such as Mariposa Grove, provide holistic ecosystems that sustain Yosemite’s unique and irreplaceable wildlife, while their populations are under threat elsewhere across California and the country. Thanks to the commitment of Conservancy supporters, the restoration of Mariposa Grove will allow beautiful wildlife species to flourish in this dynamic, natural environment for generations to come. ■



CALIFORNIA SPOTTED OWL

The California spotted owl makes its home in old-growth forests, such as the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, but has been experiencing low survival rates.



PALLID BAT

The pallid bat uses the hollows of the giant sequoia trunks as roosting sites and forages for food among the leaves and branches of the canopy in Mariposa Grove.



PACIFIC FISHER

The Mariposa Grove project will restore prime denning habitat for the Pacific fisher, a candidate for the endangered species list.

A Closer Look at Life in Mariposa Grove

If you've been to the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, you probably spent a lot of time looking up. As some of the largest living things on earth, giant sequoias can grow to almost 300 feet. That's nearly the length of a football field! But there's more to the grove than just towering trees. The giant sequoias are part of a complex and diverse ecosystem, supporting a variety of plant and animal life from root to canopy. Next time you visit, be sure to spend some time looking all around — you may just discover a whole new world.

LONG-HORNED BEETLE

The long-horned beetle is one of the key assistants to giant sequoia regeneration. Their larvae bore holes into cones, drying and opening the scales to release seeds.



SEQUOIA NEEDLES

Small, scale-like needles cover the branches of giant sequoias. To distinguish them from neighboring trees, look for a rounded or awl-shape profile.



DOUGLAS SQUIRRELS

Douglas squirrels enjoy the fleshy green scales of young cones. A squirrel chews up to 200 cones per tree each year, releasing about 40,000 seeds.



GIANT SEQUOIA TREE BARK

Giant sequoias have fibrous, thick bark — up to 3-feet thick at the base — providing significant protection from fire.



LUPINES

More than 65 plant species thrive in Mariposa Grove. In spring and early summer, lupines carpet the ground with bright purple flowers, adding a vibrant contrast to the red bark of the sequoias.



SNOW PLANTS

Most plants use the green pigment chlorophyll to convert sunlight to sugar. The all-red snow plants thrive in the shady Grove by getting nutrients from fungi buried in the soil.



NURTURING THIRSTY GIANT SEQUOIAS

RETURNING WATER FLOW TO A VIBRANT ECOSYSTEM

BY JIM ROCHE, HYDROLOGIST, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

LEFT Melting winter snows soak into healthy wetlands, providing enough moisture for giant sequoias to thrive in dry summers. **MIDDLE** Roads such as this one will be replaced with porous surfaces, so they no longer channel water away from giant sequoia roots. **RIGHT** Informal, or “social,” trails, which have been redirecting water from the Grove, will be repaired and reseeded with native plants.

Though the giant sequoias in Mariposa Grove may tower above the ground, their vast root systems are made up of slender, thread-like feeders, soaking up water and melting snow from the soil. Precious wetland habitat has regulated the water flow that has sustained these trees for millennia, but now the wetlands are under threat.

Prior to human development, Mariposa Grove’s wetlands formed a continuous network, which is now fragmented by roads, parking areas and trails. Impervious surfaces, such as roadways, parking lots and heavily compacted soil, redirect water from thirsty tree roots. Ditches, aging culverts and informal trails further exacerbate the problem. All told, an estimated 40 acres of surface-water runoff currently is diverted from the Grove, endangering the long-term health of the giant trees. The restoration of Mariposa Grove addresses these issues through



PHOTOS: (LEFT) © JON CHRISTENSEN. (MIDDLE) © JOSH HELLING. (RIGHT & BELOW) © COURTESY OF NPS.

an integrated plan that balances the needs for habitat repair with the essential task of ensuring visitors of all abilities can experience the awe-inspiring beauty of these massive trees.

In Mariposa Grove, the health of the youngest sequoias is tied directly to the greater health of the wetlands, which are transitional areas where groundwater is close to the land's surface during the growing season. Considered highly valued resources, wetlands perform a variety of hydrological functions vital to ecosystem integrity, including replenishing groundwater resources, reducing stormwater runoff, retaining nutrients in the soil, preventing erosion through stream-bank stabilization, and moderating the temperature of streams and rivers.

The restoration project will repair and protect vital wetland habitats through the installation of wheelchair-accessible boardwalks in the lower Grove, as well as the replacement of damaged or blocked drainage culverts. Impervious surfaces, such as paved parking lots and roadways, will be reduced, removing more than 3.5 acres of asphalt. Stormwater runoff from roads and parking areas will be more evenly dispersed, facilitating natural filtration and redistribution into the ecosystem via native soils and vegetation. Combined with newly designed trails and roads resurfaced with porous materials, the project will restore natural water flow to more than 140 acres and ensure the longevity of the giant sequoias.

The Mariposa Grove restoration takes critical steps in our long-term stewardship of this natural resource. This project, made possible by Yosemite Conservancy donors such as you, will help these mighty giants make the most of limited water resources. Thanks to actions taken today, the Mariposa Grove and its inhabitants will continue to thrive. ■



JIM ROCHE is a park hydrologist for the Resources and Science Division of Yosemite National Park. He oversees projects to protect water resources, such as lakes, streams and wetlands; conducts scientific research to monitor the effects of climate change and visitor impact on aquatic resources; and informs water-supply management. Roche arrived in Yosemite in 2003 and has worked for the National Park Service for more than 16 years. He is pursuing a doctorate in hydrology at UC Merced.

YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY is providing a grant to fund the restoration of Mariposa Grove in partnership with the National Park Service. The official groundbreaking took place on Yosemite's 150th anniversary in June 2014, and the renovation work will continue in phases for several years. This landmark project will preserve and protect the giant sequoias and create a better, more enjoyable experience in the park's most popular grove.

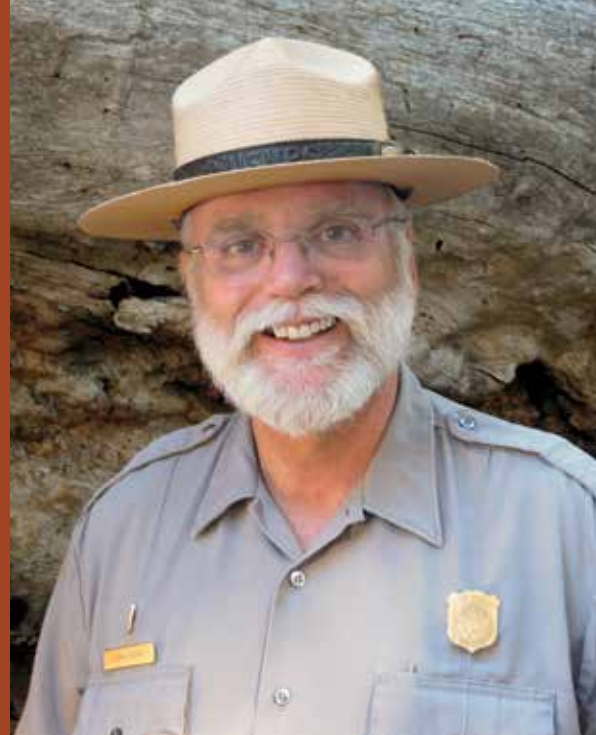
“This is not only the largest project the Yosemite Conservancy has ever funded; it is also the most exciting.”

— DEAN SHENK

Park Ranger, Yosemite National Park

Q&A

WITH A
YOSEMITE
INSIDER



Shenk has been supervising interpretive programs in Mariposa Grove since 1996.

Dean Shenk has called Yosemite National Park home for more than 40 years. Starting as a volunteer in summer 1971, he has since developed a deep knowledge of the history and lore of Yosemite. Every year, Shenk and his staff lead thousands of visitors through the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, a place he admires for its sheer magnificence. Shenk is passionate about sharing the sequoias' stories with the public, and he encourages visitors to remember that each person can make a difference caring for this park and all its resources.

Q :: When did you discover you wanted to work as a ranger in Yosemite?

A :: I've been visiting Yosemite since I was 5 years old. Whenever we had out-of-town company, we would bring them to the park. As a young volunteer, I met legendary interpreters Dave Vassar and Bob Fry at a Campfire Program in Yosemite Valley, and I was hooked on learning more.

Q :: What makes the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias so special?

A :: I have worked in each of Yosemite's three sequoia groves

and have visited many others. While each has its own charm, there is a unique sense of history in Mariposa Grove. It wasn't ancestors of these trees that were seen by John Muir, Galen Clark and Ralph Waldo Emerson ... or that inspired Congress to create the Yosemite Grant to preserve the park for the public. These are those very same trees!

Q :: After all these years, what still puzzles you about the giant sequoias?

A :: Even now, there are many mysteries about sequoias, such as why they sprout in Mariposa, Tuolumne and Merced groves, but there are virtually no natural sprouts in between. We know, in general terms, what defines the natural boundaries of sequoia groves, but it is still a mystery why the boundaries are so precise.

Q :: What are the most common questions you hear about giant sequoias?

A :: People want to know about the relationship between giant sequoias and coast redwoods. How old are individual trees? How can they live so long? Nearly all are amazed that sequoia seeds are so small yet hold such potential.

Q :: What can visitors do to protect the giant sequoias?

A :: Visitors can help by staying on marked trails and not collecting anything but memories. If people really want

to help protect the natural wonders of Mariposa Grove and Yosemite National Park, I encourage them to support Yosemite Conservancy.

Q :: How would you describe the role of Conservancy donors in preserving Mariposa Grove?

A :: It is phenomenal what the partnership between the National Park Service and Yosemite Conservancy is accomplishing. The Mariposa Grove restoration will enhance visitors' experiences and improve the natural conditions for giant sequoias and many other natural resources. This is not only the largest project the Yosemite Conservancy has ever funded; it is also the most exciting. ■

“There is a unique sense of history in Mariposa Grove.”



ABOVE Shenk and his staff welcome nearly 9,000 visitors to Mariposa Grove each year. **RIGHT** Shenk holds up a giant sequoia cone and a case of seeds, each about the size of an oatmeal flake, for park visitors to inspect.



Give the Gift of Yosemite.

Share your love for Yosemite this holiday season with a gift from the Yosemite Conservancy Store. Every purchase helps us preserve and protect Yosemite for generations to come.

Conservancy donors receive a 15% discount with code HOLIDAY2014.

**Shop now at
yosemiteconservancy.org**

Code valid through Jan. 31, 2015; online purchases only.

Projects for 2014*

CULTURAL & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Preserve Thomas Hill's Studio	\$21,542
Replace the Historic Wawona Stage Coach	\$43,500

HABITAT RESTORATION

Remove Invasive Plants from Yosemite	\$83,292
Restore Mariposa Grove	\$1,869,762
Restore Tenaya Lake's Sunrise Trail & Build Boardwalk	\$560,000
Restore Wilderness with SCA Crews	\$182,970

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Monitor Yosemite's Snowpack & Water Resources	\$83,917
Protect Songbirds & Inspire Visitors	\$40,540
Protect the American Pika	\$38,000

TRAIL REHABILITATION & ACCESS

Improve John Muir Trail & Habitat in Lyell Canyon	\$224,950
Restore Legendary Valley Trails	\$393,104
Restore Popular Climber-Access Trails	\$84,390
Trail Rehabilitation by CCC Crews: Echo Valley & Kerrick Canyon	\$558,404

VISITOR SERVICES & EDUCATION

Ask a Climber	\$38,000
Engage the Class of 2016 in Park Stewardship	\$37,331
Erase Eco-Graffiti in the Valley	\$15,000
Improve Access to Yosemite's Iconic Scenic Vistas: Tuolumne Meadows	\$82,419
Improve Tuolumne Grove Trailhead & Access Area	\$362,969
Junior Ranger Program	\$152,735
Leadership through Adventure: Youth Development with ARC	\$95,000
Parks in Focus: Youth Photography Program	\$18,000
Parsons Memorial Lodge Summer Series	\$35,000
Range of Light Film Festival	\$23,969
Rehabilitate Swinging Bridge Picnic Area	\$138,068
Revitalize Yosemite Valley Theater	\$208,723
SCA Interns Digitize Museum Archives	\$22,132
Teens Connect to Yosemite through WildLink	\$30,000
Wilderness Education Center at UC Merced	\$34,500
WildLink Alumni Explore Yosemite Careers	\$15,484
Yosemite Grant 150th Anniversary Museum Exhibit	\$148,610
Yosemite Leadership Program Summer Internship	\$119,204
Yosemite Nature Notes Videos	\$52,500

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Protect Yosemite's Great Gray Owls	\$67,300
Restore Endangered-Frog Habitat	\$30,000
Track Movements of Bears in Yosemite	\$69,000

TOTAL **\$5,980,315**

*Color represents 2014 Youth in Yosemite Programs.

THE FUTURE OF WATER

MONITORING YOSEMITE'S SNOWPACK



Yosemite's snowpack depth determines the availability of water, which provides sustenance to countless plant and animal species, and supports millions of park visitors.

Giant sequoias, green meadows, frogs, birds and people have one thing in common: They all depend on water. Yosemite's water comes from the High Sierra snowpack, and scientists agree the supply is shrinking. Predicting snow depth is vital to forecasting the park's water supply, anticipating droughts and assessing wildfire potential. Snow depth also helps inform a range of visitor needs, such as drinking-water availability and access to backcountry trails.

To determine the park's future water supply, Conservancy donors are funding a project to predict Yosemite's snowpack depth. Park scientists are developing a predictive snow model to forecast changes using state-of-the-art monitoring equipment. This model will be available to visitors as a visual, tangible representation of the link between Yosemite's decreasing snowpack and available water.

Your support means park scientists can better monitor the water supply — the life force of Yosemite. ■

FINDING STRENGTH IN YOSEMITE

YOUTH ADVENTURE PROGRAM TRANSFORMS LIVES



Participants regroup in Yosemite's high country during a wilderness expedition, where they learn the value of teamwork and the importance of protecting natural resources.



ARC participant Nolberto S. celebrates his success at rock-climbing, one of many outdoor adventure activities designed to build confidence.

**"I have taken
steps toward a
new beginning."**

— **FRANCISCO R.**
ARC Participant

For many, a Yosemite visit conjures up fond memories of parents, family and friends. But what if you didn't have anyone to introduce you to national parks? This is reality for countless young people whose families lack the time or resources to visit the park.

Preparing the next generation of Yosemite stewards is a priority for the Conservancy, which is why donors are funding Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC), an innovative program that transforms the lives of youth through outdoor education and peer mentoring. As youth learn environmental stewardship, community service and team-building, they begin to see themselves as an integral part of nature and their own communities.

ARC participant Francisco R. says of his experience: "I have taken steps toward a new beginning. I have transformed myself into a disciplined person who has a better idea of his own future."

Thank you for providing a path for young people, such as Francisco, to become Yosemite's stewards. ■

SAVING THE AMERICAN PIKA

A HIGH COUNTRY MAMMAL IN PERIL



The American pika's high country habitat may be undergoing drastic changes due to warming temperatures. The small American pika plays a big role in understanding the effects of climate change in Yosemite's high country.



PHOTOS: (ABOVE) © TIM KUHN. (LEFT) © JOSH HELLING.

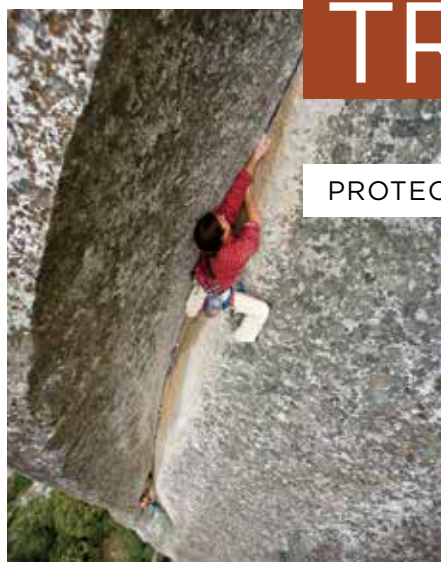
It's impossible not to admire the stunning views of glacier-carved peaks and wildflower-rimmed meadows in Yosemite's high country. But if you take your eyes off the majestic scenery, you may catch a glimpse of a furry little creature scampering underfoot. The American pika is an elusive member of the alpine ecosystem, and it provides clues about the climatic changes taking place in Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada.

In 2014, Conservancy donors are funding scientific research on the potential effects of climate change on the pika. Warmer temperatures can threaten pikas by shortening their food-gathering periods and changing the types of plants where they feed. By examining the availability of this mammal's food resources in Yosemite, scientists can protect the American pika, while better understanding the effects of climate change on Yosemite's alpine ecosystems. Your donations are making a tangible difference in protecting some of Yosemite's smallest and most vulnerable creatures. ■

PHOTOS (RIGHT) © COURTESY OF PLANET GRANITE. (BOTTOM) © GREG EPPERSON.



RESTORING CLIMBER-ACCESS TRAILS



PROTECTING RESOURCES AND CLIMBERS

TOP Volunteers help clear rock to create a clearly defined climber-access trail, ensuring climbers stay safe and surrounding habitat is protected.

BOTTOM Climbers, such as Ron Kauk (pictured here), rely on access trails to reach their favorite climbing routes.

The sheer rock faces of Yosemite Valley and the granite domes of Tuolumne Meadows draw approximately 100,000 rock-climbers each year. The sport's growing popularity means climber-access trails have greater foot traffic, leading to unsafe informal trails that jeopardize Yosemite's precious natural resources.

This year, funding from Yosemite Conservancy donors restored popular climber-access trails in the Valley and the high country. A diverse group of youth volunteers from local climbing organization Sacred Rok helped create sustainable trails, re-establish native plants and delineate paths to decrease soil erosion. Thanks to these efforts, climbers have safer entry to climbing routes with minimal disturbance to surrounding habitat.

Together with funding from corporate sponsor Planet Granite, your gifts to the Yosemite Conservancy made it possible for young people to learn the value of restoration and for the climbing community to have access to better, safer trails, while protecting Yosemite's habitats. ■

REHABILITATING SWINGING BRIDGE

A POPULAR GATHERING SPOT RECEIVES A MAKEOVER



Spring-time visitors enjoy beautiful views of Yosemite Falls from Swinging Bridge.

Conservancy donors are providing funding to rehabilitate the Swinging Bridge picnic area to ensure all park visitors can access this popular location easily.

For families and groups looking for that iconic Yosemite hangout, there are few places more ideal than the Swinging Bridge picnic area. This popular spot is centrally located in the Valley, overlooking extraordinary views of Yosemite Falls and the Merced River. But this beloved locale needs some TLC to ensure visitors can better enjoy their visit and people of all abilities can access its amenities and nearby trails.

Conservancy-donor funding is behind this year's efforts to upgrade and extend the existing trail with porous, non asphalt material that blends into the natural setting. The new trail meanders through the picnic area, offering access to all visitors. Reorienting the tables and fire grills gives mobility-impaired visitors the flexibility to choose any site.

Thanks to your donations, in partnership with the park, we are enhancing the visitor experience in the heart of Yosemite Valley. ■

PHOTOS (TOP) © COURTESY OF NPS, (BOTTOM) © KEITH WALKLET.

PHOTO © KEITH WALKLET.

HIGH-TECH YOSEMITE

CONNECT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

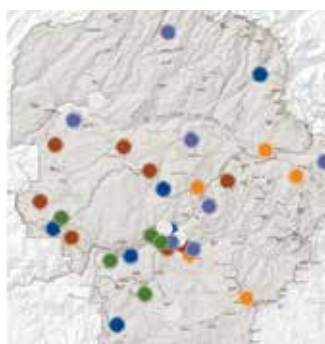
The “virtual” revolution has found its way into national parks, making nature more accessible for everyone. Conservancy donors are funding four webcams — focused on Half Dome, El Capitan, Yosemite Falls and the High Sierra — so you can get your Yosemite fix before you start your day, no matter where you are. These popular webcams are great for trip-planning, especially during the winter months when unexpected snowstorms can change plans at a moment’s notice. Don’t forget to bookmark our webcam pages at yosemiteconservancy.org/webcams to admire the beautiful views and better prepare for your memorable visit.

Before your next excursion, be sure to download the *Yosemite Guide* mobile app to get the latest information about trip-planning, activities and scheduled events delivered to your smartphone. It’s easy, convenient and green! Download and review park information before you leave home, so you can spend more time exploring Yosemite.

Your gifts to Yosemite Conservancy make these projects and so much more possible. To see how your donations make a difference, visit our interactive map at yosemiteconservancy.org/map. Click the colored dots to see how your gifts are being put to work in every corner of the park, funding trail rehabilitation, wildlife protection, habitat restoration and more. Browse project photographs, and read detailed updates describing all the ways your support is helping preserve and protect Yosemite.

With your help, the Conservancy is modernizing access to Yosemite park information, so you can make the most of your visit and better connect to this beautiful place. ■

TOP The new mobile platform for the *Yosemite Guide* puts information about park activities in the palm of your hand.



WEBCAMS

Check current conditions on the High Sierra webcam at yosemiteconservancy.org/webcams/high-sierra (screen capture from September 2014 pictured), one of four webcams funded by Conservancy donors.

INTERACTIVE MAP

Accessible through the yosemiteconservancy.org home page, an interactive map allows Conservancy donors to see their dollars at work by clicking on dots to view project updates and images.

YOSEMITE WINTER EXPLORATIONS

PLAN YOUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE WITH THE CONSERVANCY



LEFT Snowshoe Mariposa Grove to visit the California Tunnel Tree (pictured) and other famous giant sequoias. **RIGHT** Capture Tunnel View's snow-covered panorama during a photography workshop with one of our expert Yosemite photographers.



Anyone who has seen morning light reflect off a snow-covered Half Dome or enjoyed a stroll through a hushed Yosemite Valley has experienced the magic of winter in the park. Explore this winter wonderland with the Yosemite Conservancy's expert guides for an unforgettable experience. Our Outdoor Adventures offer travel throughout the park, including a snowshoe excursion through Mariposa Grove's towering giant sequoias and a day hike tracking industrious woodpeckers.

Photography enthusiasts may want to join us for a weekend workshop with our renowned photographers to discover off-the-beaten-path locations for shooting phenomenal winter landscapes. Learn tips from the pros to capture winter's beauty, from snow-filled valleys to fog-shrouded peaks.

Your program fees go directly back to the park, funding important restoration and protection work. We look forward to helping you create lasting memories in Yosemite this winter. ■

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Explore the best of Yosemite with a park insider on one of our popular Outdoor Adventures.

2015 OUTDOOR ADVENTURES HIGHLIGHTS



JANUARY 10

Snowshoe Yosemite: Mariposa Grove 1



FEBRUARY 7

Snowshoe Yosemite: Mariposa Grove 2



FEBRUARY 19-22

Yosemite Winter Photography:
Capturing Nature's Firefall



MARCH 7

Snowshoe Yosemite: Dewey Point 1



MARCH 21

Snowshoe Yosemite: Dewey Point 2



MARCH 27

Spring Canyon Wildflowers



MARCH 29

A Walk with Galen Clark: Mysteries
of the West End of Yosemite Valley



APRIL 4

Yosemite Spring Photography:
Magic of the Moonbow 1



APRIL 10-12

Learning to Lead & Leave No Trace



APRIL 11

Yosemite's Waterfalls: Grand Tour



APRIL 18

What's Beyond Mirror Lake?



APRIL 25

Strings in the Spring: Violin
Concert with Martin Chalifour



APRIL 26

The Song of Birds



See our full listing of
Outdoor Adventures at
[yosemiteconservancy.org/
outdoor-adventures](http://yosemiteconservancy.org/outdoor-adventures)



PHOTOS: (LEFT) © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY. (ABOVE) © NANCY ROBBINS.

“I expected to do a simple snowshoe and learn a little about sequoias. I got a lot more than that! I learned about the trees, their history, their influence on Muir and the birth of the national park system.”

— NADA SUTIC

Outdoor Adventures Participant



2013 Annual Report

A Special Message from the Chair & the President

As we look back on 2013, we are filled with gratitude for your commitment to Yosemite. Despite the challenges posed by the Rim Fire and the government shutdown, your unwavering support meant trails were rehabilitated, habitat restored and visitor services enhanced. Because of you, we provided essential funding to ensure all Yosemite's treasures continue to be preserved and protected.

Your contributions gave young people from all walks of life the opportunity to engage in nature through Youth in Yosemite Programs, our 2013 Signature Project. Your support for Conservancy-funded youth programs changed lives for the better, from children earning their Junior Ranger badge to college students preparing for potential careers. Conservancy grants also provided funding to protect the park's diverse wildlife, such as the great gray owl, the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and the Pacific fisher. Thanks to you, these threatened species now have a promising path to recovery.

OTHER NOTABLE 2013 ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- \$9.8 million in aid was provided to Yosemite for project grants and programs
- Nearly 43,000 Conservancy donors made a difference for Yosemite's future
- More than 15,000 acres of wilderness were surveyed by youth crews to identify invasive plants and inappropriately located campsites
- 26,000 children earned their Junior Ranger badge
- 53 project grants and visitor-service programs were funded, ranging from trail and habitat restoration, to cultural resource protection, to enhanced visitor services

Your gifts ensure the passage of a meaningful legacy of conservation to future generations, and we are thrilled and humbled to play a role in preserving your park.

See you in the park,

John Dorman, *Chair*

Mike Tollefson, *President*



Please enjoy highlights of our 2013 Annual Report.

The full-length report can be viewed on our website at yosemiteconservancy.org/annual-report

Giving Back to Yosemite

How You Made a Difference

As a Conservancy donor, you are making a tangible difference in Yosemite each and every day. We are excited to recap last year's incredible accomplishments — all made possible because of your support and participation. From improving the visitor experience in Yosemite Valley to restoring high country meadows, your passion and dedication ensures future generations can create their own beautiful Yosemite memories.

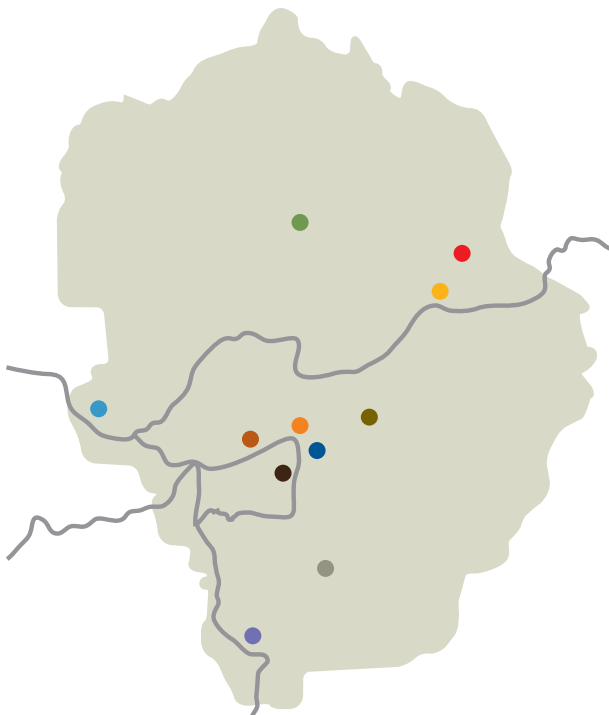
In 2013, your gifts funded 53 project grants and visitor-service programs. Hundreds of California black-oak seedlings were planted throughout the Valley. A science-based conservation program for the great gray owl was implemented, and young people had life-changing experiences through Youth in Yosemite Programs.



Your gifts ensure programs, such as the popular Junior Ranger program, will inspire thousands of children each year.

By participating in our adventure programs, art workshops and theater presentations, you helped support Yosemite. Proceeds from our bookstores and Conservancy publications, such as *Seed of the Future*, went directly back to the park, preserving and protecting Yosemite for generations to come.

Your Support is Everywhere



Everywhere you look in Yosemite, your gifts are making a tangible difference. Whether it's restoring irreplaceable treasures such as Mariposa Grove, protecting rare species of wildlife such as the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, or inspiring young adventurers to steward park resources, your gifts are preserving and protecting Yosemite.

- Protecting Yosemite's Giant Sequoia Groves
- Youth in Yosemite
- Preserving Ostrander Ski Hut
- Legendary Valley Trails Restoration
- Saving the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog
- Preserving the California Black Oak in Yosemite Valley
- Outdoor Adventures
- Retail & Publishing
- Volunteers
- Wilderness Center
- Yosemite Theater

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The amounts presented here are derived from Yosemite Conservancy's audited financial statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2013. A copy of the audited financial report is available on request.

Statement of Financial Position

As of Dec. 31, 2013

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash & Investments	\$15,502,873
Receivables & Other Assets	\$1,720,771

Total Current Assets **\$17,223,644**

Pledges Receivable, Net of Current Portion	\$1,431,339
Furniture & Equipment, Net of Accumulated Depreciation	\$177,304
Land Held for Future Use	\$764,200
Deposits	\$14,500

TOTAL ASSETS **\$19,610,987**

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$608,183
Grants Payable to Yosemite National Park, Current Portion	\$852,535

Total Current Liabilities **\$1,460,718**

NET ASSETS

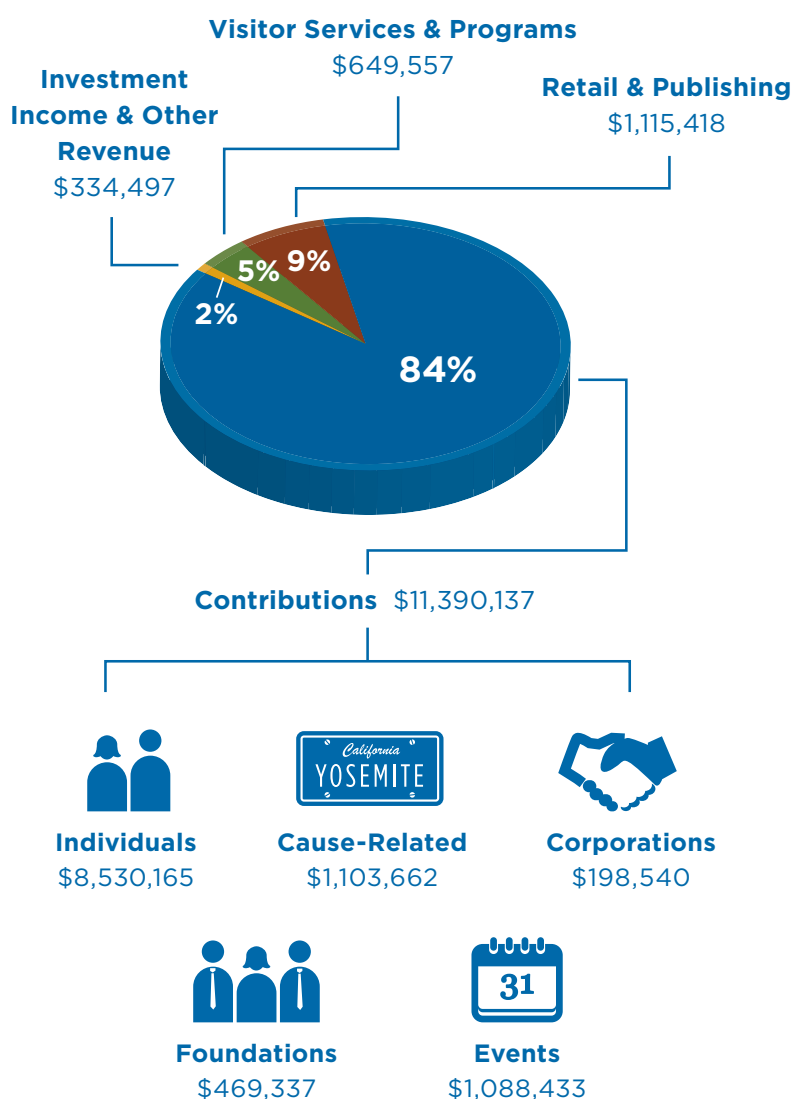
Unrestricted*	\$12,830,645
Temporarily Restricted	\$4,305,915
Permanently Restricted	\$1,013,709

Total Net Assets **\$18,150,269**

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS **\$19,610,987**

*Reserves are maintained to meet future grant obligations to Yosemite National Park.

Support & Revenue \$13,489,609



Dec. 31, 2013

Aid to Yosemite National Park

\$9,770,310



The amounts presented here are derived from Yosemite Conservancy's audited financial statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2013. A copy of the audited financial report is available on request.

Statement of Activities

As of Dec. 31, 2013

SUPPORT & REVENUE

Contributions	\$11,390,137
Retail & Publishing	\$1,115,418
Visitor Services & Programs	\$649,557
Investment Income & Other Revenue	\$334,497

TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE **\$13,489,609**

EXPENSES

Aid to Park

Park Enhancements	\$6,540,202
Retail & Publishing	\$1,189,296
Visitor Services & Programs	\$2,040,812

Total Aid to Park **\$9,770,310**

Administrative	\$698,513
Fundraising	\$2,879,970

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$13,348,793**

VOLUNTEERS

Number of Visitors Served	419,902
Number of Volunteer Hours	15,703
Rate of Volunteer Hours	\$24.75

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE **\$388,649**



LEFT Gretchen remembers Joe (pictured) as being “always thankful to good friend Jack Walston for encouraging us to support the good work of Yosemite Conservancy.”

“Supporting the Mariposa Grove project was an easy choice to make.”

— **GRETCHEN AUGUSTYN**
Yosemite Conservancy Donor

Honoring a Husband and Father with a Gift to the Grove

Gretchen Augustyn and her late husband, Joe, first visited Yosemite when they arrived in California from Ohio in 1966. Inspired by the beauty of the mountains, Joe named his then-fledgling metal-manufacturing business “Sierra Alloys,” because, he joked, he “would rather be in the Sierra than working.”

In later years, the couple joined the Yosemite Conservancy Council, and shared fond memories of touring the park during semi-annual meetings and visiting with their grown children. When Joe passed away in 2010, Gretchen decided to do something exceptional to remember him. She chose to honor her husband’s legacy with a generous gift-of-a-lifetime to



RIGHT Several members of the Augustyn family gathered to enjoy groundbreaking celebrations in Mariposa Grove. Pictured, left to right: Debi (with dog Jake), Jeff, Gretchen and Jennifer.



MIDDLE Gretchen's and the Augustyn family's gifts honor Joe's commitment to preserving Yosemite and Mariposa Grove.

Yosemite Conservancy toward the restoration of Mariposa Grove. "Supporting the Mariposa Grove project was an easy choice to make," Gretchen says. "Joe and I enjoyed visiting the Grove together and were overwhelmed by the grandeur and the enormity of the place."

Friends at Yosemite Conservancy remember Joe as a man who was passionate about conservation and exploring California's natural beauty, with an abiding appreciation for Yosemite. "We are touched by Gretchen's thoughtful tribute to her husband," says Mike Tollefson, president of Yosemite Conservancy. "Joe is greatly missed, but we are honored to see his legacy live on in the restoration of Mariposa Grove — a place that meant so much to him."

Inspired to protect the giant sequoias, Gretchen encouraged her family and friends to contribute gifts in Joe's honor. "The kids thought it was a great idea and jumped in, carrying

through in their father's memory," she says. Gretchen believes we all must take responsibility for safeguarding our national treasures and is delighted to share her enthusiasm with the next generation of Yosemite Conservancy donors.

Gretchen is passionate about supporting her favorite park: "I'm honored to be involved with all the work of Yosemite Conservancy. I feel strongly about supporting the park for generations yet to come, and for my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

Thanks to the generosity of the Augustyn family and donors such as you, this natural cathedral will thrive far into the future. ■



ABOVE Kendra and Paul enjoyed the “magical early morning stillness” of the Grove before a hard day of weed-pulling. **RIGHT** Kendra used the Calflora app on a tablet to track invasive weeds.



PHOTOS: © KENDRA JONES & PAUL DOYLE

Pulling Weeds, Planting Love: Volunteering in the Grove

Kendra Jones and Paul Doyle are a couple in love — with each other, and with Yosemite. From family camping trips during their youth to vacations discovering the park together, they share fond memories of Yosemite. In 2014, they attended their third work week with Conservancy volunteers, this time removing invasive bull thistle plants from steep hillsides in Mariposa Grove and tracking plants with the Calflora app.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME CONSERVANCY VOLUNTEERS?

The thought of working with National Park Service staff and doing valuable work in the park was very appealing. And the reality has proved to be even better than advertised.

WHAT WAS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

We liked spending time outdoors in a beautiful place with people who share our enthusiasm for Yosemite. This was our third time volunteering, and we plan on many more. In one week, our team removed about 15,000 bull thistle plants!

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

The people we met — fellow volunteers, park rangers and Conservancy staff — were all committed park fans with unique knowledge, insights and great stories. It’s amazing how much we learned in a week!

Thank you, Kendra and Paul — and all the dedicated volunteers — for giving your time and energy to care for Yosemite.

“In one week, our team removed about 15,000 bull thistle plants.”

— KENDRA JONES

Yosemite Conservancy Donor & Volunteer



PHOTO: © MITHUN.

ABOVE Artist's rendering of trailhead and entrance to Mariposa Grove.

➤ Protecting Ancient Giants *continued from p. 5*

Raised boardwalks will be built over sensitive habitat, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the forest and get close to the trees, while safeguarding the shallow root system. Several paved road segments will be converted to pedestrian trails, restoring peace and tranquility.

“Thanks to the generosity of our donors, this work will restore the health and vitality of Mariposa Grove,” says Mike

Tollefson, president of Yosemite Conservancy. “Visitors will be able to walk among the trees and experience living history in a cathedral-like setting.”

As a Conservancy donor, your gifts today are part of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure the future of an ancient treasure. Thank you for helping these sentinels live well beyond our lifetimes, carrying our legacy within their massive boughs to future generations. ■

Love Yosemite. Show the World.

Yosemite Conservancy receives a portion of revenue from the sale and renewal of every Yosemite license plate. Buying a California specialty plate is a great way to show the world your love of Yosemite, while supporting projects and programs that preserve Yosemite National Park.

Order your plate today at:
yosemiteconservancy.org/support-us

Already have a plate? Let us know:
info@yosemiteconservancy.org

YOSEMITE THROUGH YOUR LENS

YOSEMITE'S MAJESTY AS CAPTURED BY OUR SUPPORTERS



01 Half Dome at Twilight

PHOTO BY © JEREMY EVANS

02 Fall Leaves by the Merced River

PHOTO BY © AARON MEYERS

03 Coyote in Winter

PHOTO BY © SANDRA SILVESTRI

04 High Sierra Snowshoeing

PHOTO BY © DOUGLAS CROFT

Do you have a special memory you would like to share?

We love to see photos from your first or 100th visit to Yosemite. Our staff will select a few for printing in each issue of *Yosemite Conservancy*.



Visit Yosemite Conservancy on **Facebook**, **Flickr** or **Pinterest**, and share any photos of a special place you like in Yosemite, or email your photo submission to community@yosemiteconservancy.org



YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY

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YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY

Ways to Give

THERE ARE MANY WAYS you and your organization can support the meaningful work of Yosemite Conservancy. We look forward to exploring these philanthropic opportunities with you.

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PHOTO: © KEITH WALKLET.

Honor Yosemite with Your Legacy

Abraham Lincoln, John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt understood that the wonders of the American wilderness are not only our inheritance, but our responsibility. Leave a legacy gift to Yosemite Conservancy and join this visionary group of conservationists in ensuring Yosemite National Park is preserved and protected for generations to come.

To find out how to make your legacy gift, please contact Darlene Bellucci at dbellucci@yosemiteconservancy.org or 415-434-8446 x318.

Find planned-giving resources online at yosemiteconservancy.org/planned-giving