

YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY

A woman with long white hair and glasses is seated, weaving a basket. She is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt. In the background, several animal skins, including what appears to be a deer or elk skin, are hanging on a dark wooden wall. To the right, a colorful beaded necklace hangs vertically. The overall atmosphere is warm and traditional.

SPRING.SUMMER 2013 :: VOLUME 04.ISSUE 01

Preserving Yosemite's Cultural Past

INSIDE

The Legacy of Yosemite's Traditional Basket-Weavers

Youth Build a Bridge to the Future

Expert Insights Into the Untold Story of the Buffalo Soldiers

Q&A with a Yosemite Cultural Legend



**YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY**

Providing For Yosemite's Future

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MISSION

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



Preserving Yosemite's Cultural Past

Many forces have shaped Yosemite. From the millennia-long progression of glacial ice to the 19th century arrival of western pioneers, Yosemite has long been a place of natural and cultural transformations. Through the ages, people have been drawn to this special place and have both changed and been changed by its remarkable landscape.

In this issue, we are sharing with you stories of Yosemite's cultural past and the importance of preserving it for the future. Thanks to you and all our donors, 2013 brings more opportunities to preserve the park's vivid history. Yosemite legend Julia Parker talks about her role weaving traditional handmade baskets as one of the park's Indian cultural demonstrators. Park ranger Shelton Johnson tells the untold story of Yosemite's earliest guardians, the Buffalo Soldiers.

Read about the exciting projects and programs kicking off this year. Learn about the reintroduction of Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog populations and trail-restoration efforts taking place in Lyell Canyon. Peruse highlights about upcoming cultural- and natural-history programs, Outdoor Adventures and live performances at Yosemite Theater. Discover stories of projects that bring underserved students to the park — with life-changing results.

Your support is helping preserve the cultural legacy of Yosemite and ensuring this remarkable place will be protected for future generations. Thank you for your support.

See you in the park,

Mike

Mike Tollefson, President

COVER PHOTO Yosemite cultural legend Julia Parker demonstrates traditional American Indian basket-weaving at the Yosemite Museum.



Join Yosemite Conservancy on **Facebook** and **Flickr**.





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Carrier of BASKETS

A HISTORY OF INDIAN CULTURAL DEMONSTRATORS IN YOSEMITE



Tucked away in a quiet corner of the Yosemite Museum, Julia Parker continues a time-honored tradition. Her steady hands work quickly and expertly to weave a bundle of small willow twigs. Slowly, distinctive patterns emerge, and the familiar form of a basket takes shape: A work of art is created by one of Yosemite's living legends.

Parker, 83, is Yosemite National Park's longest-tenured current employee and is as much of an icon as Half Dome or El Capitan. In her role as Indian cultural demonstrator, she has dedicated her life to sharing traditional American Indian culture and crafts with park visitors. Parker represents a legacy of cultural demonstrators whose contributions are being celebrated with an upcoming exhibit at the Yosemite Museum. "I studied with a lot of weavers throughout my lifetime, learning different styles," Parker says. "I thank them for giving me their time to show me how to make their baskets."

The art of weaving extends beyond the creation of the basket itself — a key part of the process is collecting the plant material while having a deep respect for nature. "You have to have a great understanding about the fibers you work with," Parker explains. "You have to do song and prayer, and you wait for the leaves to turn yellow and fall off." Through the art of basket-weaving, Parker is preserving the story of her elders and sharing her deep connection to Yosemite with park visitors.

Parker is keenly aware of her role as the "carrier of the baskets," which is why she is passing down her craft to her daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter, each of whom is forging her own path in traditional basket-weaving. This unique intergenerational bond is as much a part of Yosemite's story as the rivers and glaciers that shape the landscape.

SHARING TRADITIONS

The story of Yosemite's Indian cultural demonstrators is often overshadowed by the park's world-famous natural features. Thanks to donor support, Yosemite Conservancy is funding *Sharing Traditions: Celebrating Native Basketry Demonstrations in Yosemite 1929–1980*, an exhibit at the Yosemite Museum in Summer 2013. The exhibit will showcase the history of weaving demonstrators in the park from 1929 to 1980, examining their critical role as American Indian liaisons to the public. This fascinating story will be told primarily through the work of three women — Maggie Howard, Lucy Telles and Julia Parker — all of



whom have worked in Yosemite National Park and created many baskets currently housed in the museum's collection.

The history of traditional basket-weavers will be honored by displaying their handiwork, along with audio and video materials designed to convey a greater depth of Yosemite's cultural diversity. For example, archived film footage of the weavers will be on display to help frame the social and historic context of their basketry. The exhibit will also engage an intern from local tribal communities to expand upon cultural demonstrations and provide additional ways for visitors to learn about Yosemite's "living history."

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

By visiting the *Sharing Traditions* exhibit, park visitors will have the opportunity to connect meaningfully to the region's traditional culture, leading to a greater appreciation of the link between natural and cultural resources. "I want visitors to have a better understanding about the baskets and about the plants we have in Yosemite," Parker says. "It makes for a better understanding of the whole Yosemite Valley."

As a donor to the Conservancy, your commitment to Yosemite helps educate visitors about the important role of cultural history while honoring the remarkable people whose dedication to traditional handiwork helped shape this magnificent place. ■

The Sharing Traditions exhibit will open at the Yosemite Museum on June 4.



Learn more about this project on our website
yosemiteconservancy.org/sharing-traditions



BRIDGE *Youth in Yosemite Programs Engage Diverse Youth* to the FUTURE

For many people, a love of Yosemite begins at an early age. Whether it's hiking Yosemite Falls with their families or backpacking wilderness trails with friends, these early experiences forge a lifelong appreciation for natural places. But, for many young people, these experiences are just out of reach, due to social or financial barriers.

"The students we work with don't have familial or intrinsic

connections to parks or wild places," park ranger Jesse Chakrin says. "Sometimes it's difficult for them to know these places exist." Your support is making it possible for youth from underserved communities to build a connection to these places.

Thanks to donor support, Yosemite Conservancy is funding 12 Youth in Yosemite Programs in 2013. Many are focused on bringing underserved youth into Yosemite for incredible wilderness experiences with life-changing results.

Youth in Yosemite Programs provide valuable practical and life skills. For example, Parks in Focus allows underserved middle-school students to explore nature through digital photography. Students also participate in hands-on restoration activities, such as removing invasive plants from Mariposa Grove. These efforts not only build practical skills for youth, but they also provide a valuable service to the park.

Participants in Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC) work together to complete a range of academic and physical activities, including a wilderness retreat. “ARC has taught me a lot of things I never thought I would experience, and I never thought I had inside of me,” reflects 17-year-old Jesus, from Dos Palos, Calif. “It taught me to have more confidence in myself.”

Youth programs also engage students by inspiring them to consider careers in national parks. WildLink Bridge allows diverse high-school and college students to job-shadow Yosemite professionals. In 2012, six participants spent 12 days in the park, assisting in a restoration field project and completing a wilderness patrol. “There are different barriers that don’t let youth like me get up here, and that’s why I’m excited to be here,” shares 15-year-old Arturo, from Fresno, Calif. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Students participating in the Yosemite Leadership Program (YLP) summer internship work directly with the National Park Service and other park partners. Youth experience firsthand the importance of conservation — a message they bring back to their communities. “Back at home, I’m trying to get people interested in coming [to Yosemite], especially the Latino community,” says 22-year-old Jesus Dolores of

“These programs help make meaningful and lifelong connections for youth to places such as Yosemite.”

— **SHAUNA POTOCKY**
Branch Chief of Education at
Yosemite National Park

Madera, Calif. “I’m really trying to engage them and get them inspired to come here.”

In 2013, many more underserved youth will have the opportunity for life-changing experiences. “These programs help make meaningful and lifelong connections for youth to places such as Yosemite,” says Shauna Potocky, branch chief of education at Yosemite National Park. “So many of these programs wouldn’t happen if it weren’t for Yosemite Conservancy and its donors.”

Thanks to your support, youth are not only transforming their lives, but they are making a difference for Yosemite well into the future. ■



Watch youth participants say “thank you” for changing their lives on our website at yosemiteconservancy.org/youth-yosemite-video



OPPOSITE PAGE Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC) participants summit Mt. Watkins during a 40-day wilderness-immersion course. **ABOVE LEFT** WildLink youth learn wilderness survival skills during a backpacking trip. **ABOVE MIDDLE** A Parks in Focus student explores Yosemite Valley with a digital camera. **ABOVE RIGHT** Yosemite Leadership Program (YLP) participants assist an invasive-plant removal project in Mariposa Grove.

Protecting Yosemite's Songbirds

VOLUNTEERS COLLECT
VALUABLE DATA FOR
SONGBIRD CONSERVATION

The cheerful call of a Yosemite songbird is one of the most loved and cherished sounds a visitor can hear. The park's exceptional bird diversity is dependent on a range of habitats that are under threat due to environmental change inside and outside the park. To learn more about the status of songbird populations, Yosemite Conservancy is supporting a research program that builds on two decades of data. Visitors can participate in bird banding and experience the joy of holding a living songbird in hand, inspiring a lifelong commitment to environmental conservation.



Learn more about volunteer opportunities at yosemiteconservancy.org/songbird-study



ABOVE This male Lazuli Bunting has been banded, measured and weighed before being released back into his habitat. These data contribute toward a nationwide effort to determine the health of songbird populations.

BELOW A group of Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) participants learns about songbird research.





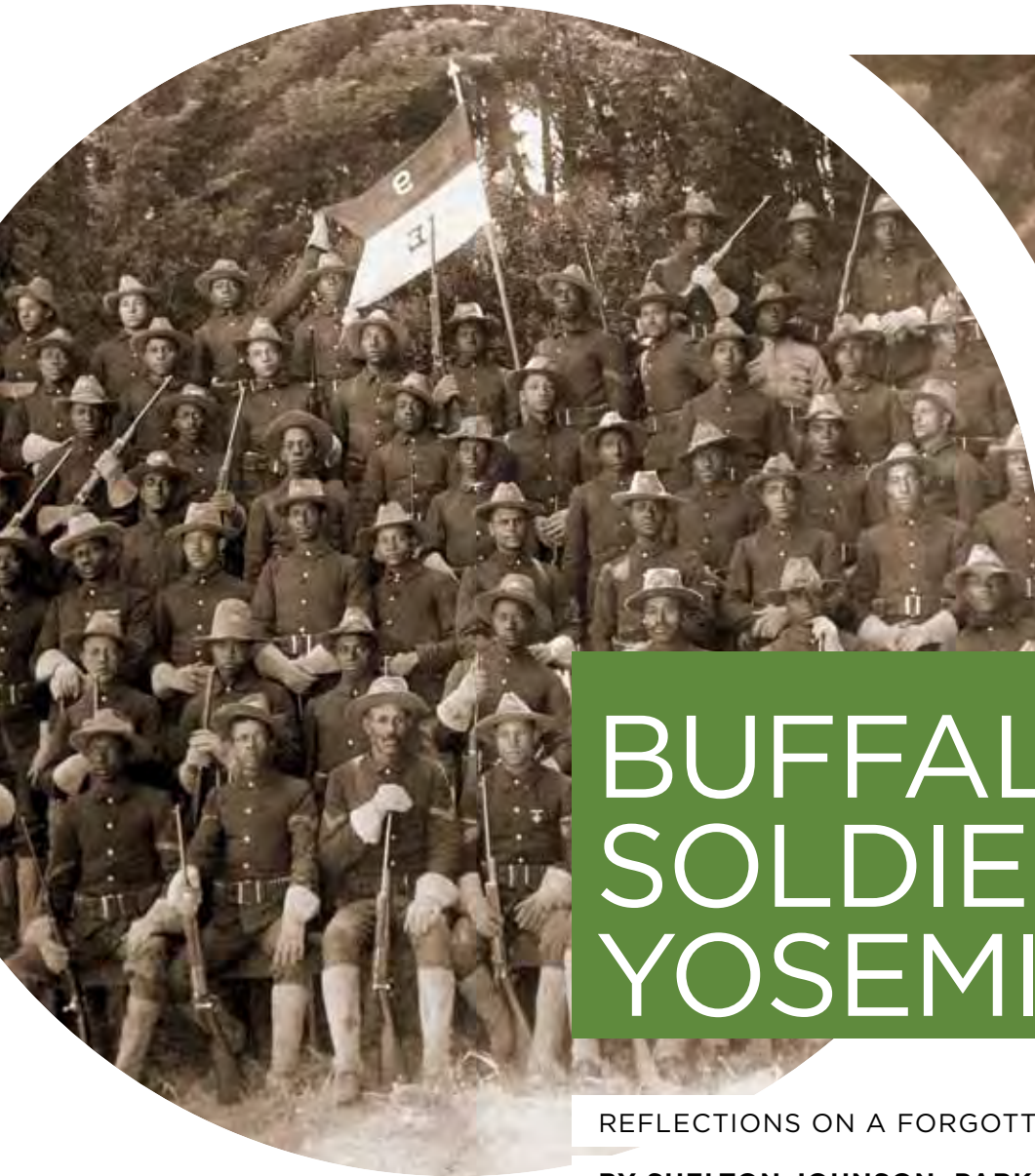
ABOVE A biologist's keen eye notes a molting wing feather on this Stellar's jay. Birds' molt patterns can help biologists determine the age and, sometimes, nutrition of birds. **BELOW** An immature Williamson's sapsucker has been banded and is ready to be released.



ABOVE A volunteer prepares to release a male Western tanager. This bird will soon migrate south to spend the winter in Mexico or farther south in Costa Rica. **BELOW** The hermit warbler is the most plentiful nesting warbler in Yosemite's mid-elevation coniferous forests.



PHOTOS: © COURTESY OF NPS.



BUFFALO SOLDIERS IN YOSEMITE

REFLECTIONS ON A FORGOTTEN HISTORY

BY SHELTON JOHNSON, PARK RANGER

ABOVE Stationed at the Presidio, members of the Ninth Cavalry were known as Buffalo Soldiers to the Plains Indians, circa 1900. **ABOVE RIGHT** A screenshot from the film trailer displays stunning Yosemite settings and actors in authentic period costumes.

The African-American troops who patrolled the wilderness of Yosemite and Sequoia national parks served an important role in the early days of our first federally protected lands. These men, the children of enslaved people, were stewards of this incredible landscape and served the public good of all Americans, regardless of color or ethnicity. As some of the first “park rangers,” they were known as “Buffalo Soldiers” to the Plains Indians and were tasked with evicting poachers and livestock from park lands, as well as constructing the first roads and trails.

Their story was lost for a time before being rediscovered among patrol and superintendent reports and old letters. On beautifully handwritten Army muster rolls, there were names without faces. In old photographs, there were faces without names. The people were forgotten, and what they accomplished was forgotten, too. The knowledge that they built the first usable wagon road into Sequoia’s Giant



PHOTOS: (LEFT) © U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE (PRESIDIO). (MIDDLE) COURTESY OF NPS. (RIGHT) © KEITH WALKLET.

Forest, the first trail to the top of Mt. Whitney — then the highest peak in the United States — and the first museum in what would become the National Park System was also forgotten.

For me, these men were family, and it was well past time for the world to hear their story. When I saw them staring at me out of history, it was like my father was peering at me through their eyes. Of all the visitors to Yosemite National Park, only one percent are African-American. Even though the descendents of the 500 Buffalo Soldiers who served in the Sierra Nevada must number in the thousands, many probably have no idea their ancestors once protected Yosemite National Park and have no idea a family trip to Yosemite is a homecoming.

With the assistance of Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Sterling Johnson, the story of the Buffalo Soldiers will be told before the majestic backdrops of Tuolumne Meadows, Glacier Point, the Minarets and elsewhere. This story is so significant, because it connects the disconnected and powerfully counters the false assertion that African-American culture has little to do with national parks or wilderness preservation. Because of your support, this story will be available in an accessible format that will honor this forgotten history while inspiring all people to preserve and protect Yosemite. ■

“For me, these men were family, and it was well past time for the world to hear their story.”

— **SHELTON JOHNSON**
Yosemite Park Ranger



SHELTON JOHNSON is a ranger at Yosemite National Park and an important advocate for bringing culturally diverse populations to the national parks. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and author of the novel, *Gloryland*. Johnson performs *The Forgotten Yosemite: A Buffalo Soldier Remembers* at Yosemite Theater. In 2009, he received the National Freeman Tilden Award as the best interpreting ranger in the National Park Service for his work with Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan on their national park film, *America's Best Idea*.

YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY has provided a grant to Yosemite National Park to fund the production of a film that will be completed in winter 2013. The film is written and performed by park ranger Shelton Johnson and is funded by Yosemite Conservancy and Delaware North Companies, Inc.

“It’s important for me to be able to tell this story, because I think now I’m the carrier of the baskets.”

— JULIA PARKER

Indian Cultural Demonstrator

Q&A

WITH A
YOSEMITE
INSIDER



ABOVE Parker pauses for a photo while crafting a traditional basket.

As Yosemite National Park’s longest-tenured current employee, Julia Parker has the important role of communicating Yosemite’s cultural history. Since 1960, Julia has demonstrated basket-weaving techniques at the Yosemite Museum. She has studied under master weavers and become an innovator in her own right, with her handiwork on display at the Smithsonian Institution and in the Queen of England’s collection. Parker has dedicated her life not only to making beautiful works of art, but also to ensuring the important knowledge and skills passed down from her elders continue to flourish today.

Q :: How did you start working as an Indian cultural demonstrator for Yosemite National Park?

A :: My grandmother-in-law [Lucy Telles] worked here in the park before she passed away. For about five years or so, there was no story about the first people ... so they asked me. I wasn’t very good at talking to people, but the National Park Service brought me on, and little by little, I began to get more confidence talking and speaking. I just happened

to be in a place where the story was needed.

Q :: Tell us about the process for gathering the plant materials needed for your baskets. Why is it important for you to share this knowledge?

A :: You have to have a great understanding about the fibers you work with. You have to know when they’re ready, when the bark will stay on the wood, when the bark will peel off the wood. It’s important for me to be able to tell this story, because I think now I’m the carrier of the baskets.

Q :: Your daughter Lucy and your granddaughter Ursula are both continuing the tradition of basket-weaving. What does it mean to you to pass along this knowledge?

A :: I think this is important to Yosemite because they’re bonded here. These are the plants their grandmothers used. We’re always learning, trying new things. We all go out together [to collect materials], and they learn about the baskets and about having ownership.

Q :: At the Yosemite Museum, you interact with visitors on a daily basis. Why do you think it’s important for visitors to learn about basket-weaving? What do you want people to remember?

A :: I want [visitors] to come through the door not realizing what a basket is and, when they leave, I want them to have a better understanding about the basket and about the plants we have in Yosemite. [Visitors] are really happy to know they learned something, and it makes for a better understanding of the whole Yosemite Valley.

Q :: Yosemite Conservancy is supporting the *Sharing Traditions: Celebrating Native Basketry Demonstrations in Yosemite 1929-1980* exhibit, which is scheduled to open in June 2013. How would you describe the Conservancy's role in supporting your work?

A :: [The Conservancy] is doing the right thing. We're planning to display our baskets in the Yosemite Museum, and the Conservancy is helping us. They're helping generate a lot more awareness of what Yosemite is and what has come before, even the little things. ■



Help support the *Sharing Traditions* exhibit and similar cultural projects by visiting our website at yosemiteconservancy.org



ABOVE In her role as cultural demonstrator, Parker shares with park visitors of all ages the traditions of her people.

“... I want them to have a better understanding about the basket and about the plants we have in Yosemite.”

— JULIA PARKER

Indian Cultural Demonstrator

Your Yosemite. Your Way.

Discover Yosemite by planning a custom adventure with your own expert naturalist.

Our naturalists are passionate about Yosemite, and can help you plan a hike to celebrate a milestone, or lead your family on a wildlife or botany quest. Experience the thrill of the outdoors and help provide for the future of this extraordinary place.

Start your adventure at
yosemiteconservancy.org



New Projects for 2013*

CULTURAL & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Ensuring a Reliable Source of Native Plants: A Partnership with the Tuolumne Band of Mewuk Indians	\$29,233
Preserving History: Restoring the Yosemite Valley Cemetery	\$72,967
Rehabilitating Ostrander Ski Hut	\$63,355
Sharing Traditions Exhibit: History of Cultural Demonstrators in Yosemite	\$102,090

HABITAT RESTORATION

Mariposa Grove Restoration	\$1,845,658
Preserving the California Black Oak in Yosemite Valley	\$77,982
Removing Invasive Plants from Yosemite	\$77,125
Wilderness Restoration with SCA Crews	\$199,975

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Protecting Songbirds & Inspiring Visitors	\$37,057
Protecting Yosemite's Giant Sequoia Groves	\$54,345

TRAIL REPAIR & ACCESS

Gaylor Lakes Trail Restoration	\$98,150
Improving Visitor Access to Trails: CCC Internship	\$63,000
John Muir Trail and Habitat Improvements in Lyell Canyon	\$232,500
Legendary Valley Trails Restoration	\$360,950
Restoring Popular Climbing Trails	\$60,650
Tenaya Lake Trail Restoration: South Shore	\$148,610
Trail Rehabilitation by CCC Crews	\$606,836
Youth Crews (YCC) Restore Trails	\$384,205

VISITOR SERVICES & EDUCATION

A Class Act: Enhancing Park Stewardship for the Class of 2016	\$56,085
Adventure to Leadership: Youth Development Program with ARC	\$95,000
Ask a Climber	\$35,100
Buffalo Soldiers in Yosemite Film	\$51,000
Junior Ranger Program	\$123,420
New Trail Information Panels: Yosemite Valley Visitor Center	\$50,600
Parks In Focus: Youth Photography Program	\$18,000
Parsons Memorial Lodge Summer Series	\$30,000
Restoring the Boulder Garden at Happy Isles	\$17,429
Restoring Yosemite's Iconic Scenic Vistas	\$98,871
Teens Connect to Yosemite through WildLink	\$30,000
Wilderness Education Center at UC Merced	\$115,220
WildLink Alumni Explore Careers in Yosemite	\$12,900
Yosemite Guide Mobile App	\$63,600
Yosemite Leadership Program Summer Internship	\$125,065
Yosemite Nature Notes Web Video Series	\$48,000

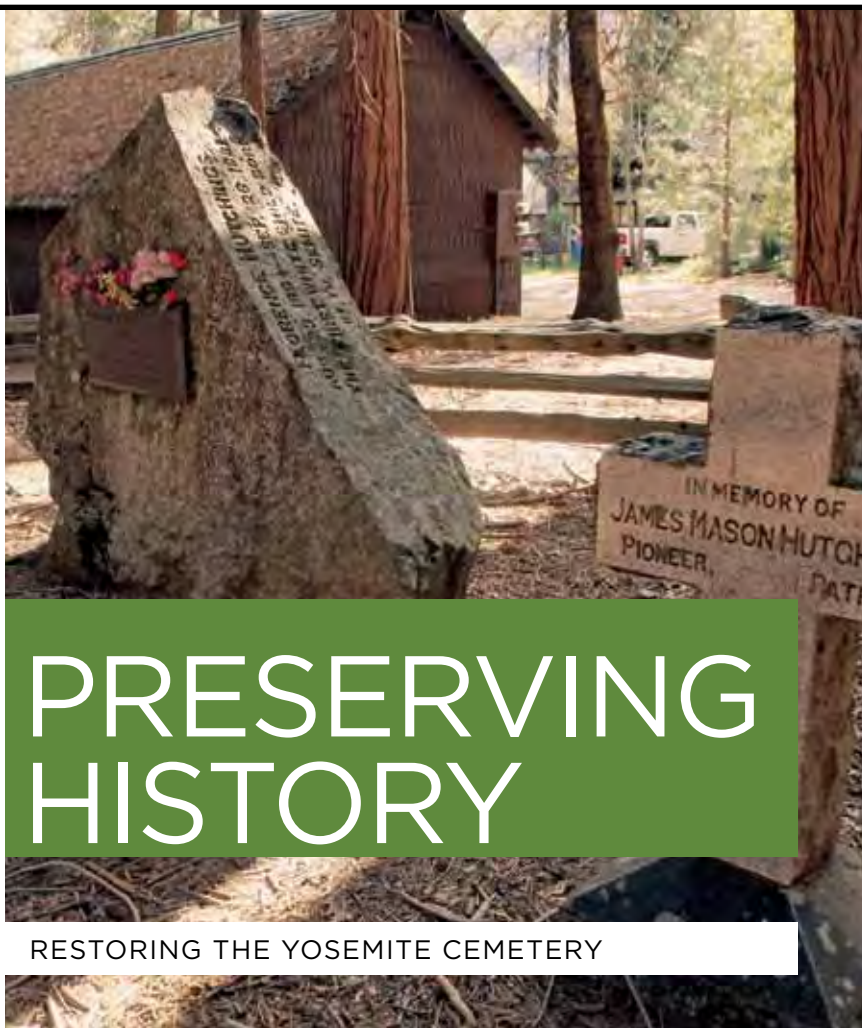
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Protecting Yosemite's Great Gray Owls	\$67,015
Recovery of the Rare Pacific Fisher	\$116,263
Saving the Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frogs from Extinction	\$100,891

TOTAL **\$5,769,147**

*Total project funding is included for multi-year projects.

Color represents 2013 Youth in Yosemite Programs.



ABOVE Headstones such as the ones of Florence Hutchings, the first non-American Indian child born in Yosemite, and her father, James Mason Hutchings, a publisher and early promoter of the park, connect visitors with Yosemite's fascinating history.

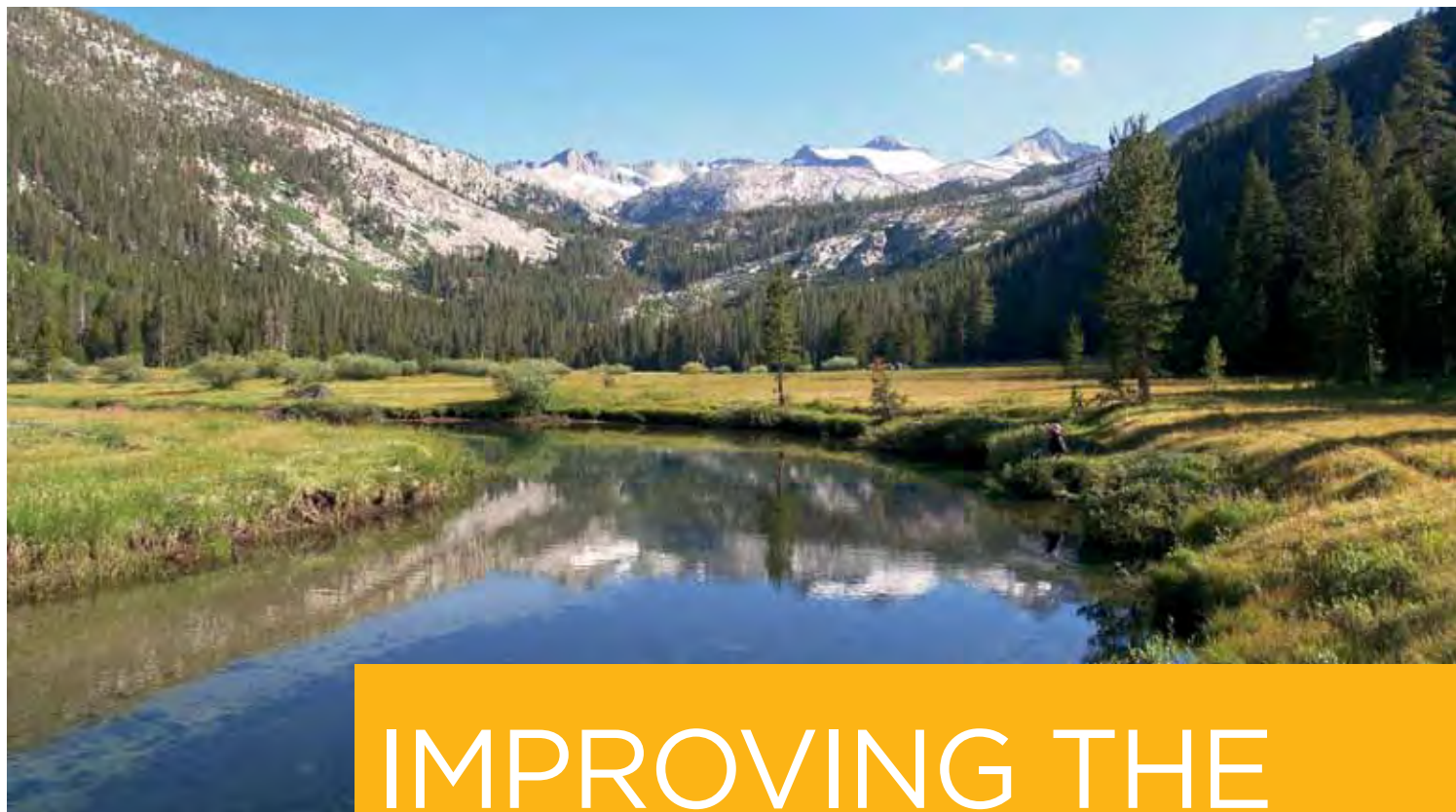
Humans have shaped Yosemite for thousands of years, from the American Indians who were the park's original caretakers, to the pioneers who launched the national-park movement. Many of Yosemite's first guardians are buried in the Yosemite Cemetery, located near the Valley Visitor Center. Largely neglected for decades, the cemetery is in need of restoration to preserve the tangible link to these iconic figures.

Historic headstones, wrought-iron fencing and damaged walls will be rehabilitated with assistance from a stone conservator. Support for these efforts is possible, in part, thanks to corporate donors. "We are delighted to provide funding to help restore the cemetery," says Jennifer Tombaugh, president of Tauck, Inc. "In doing so, we aim to preserve these stories for future generations."

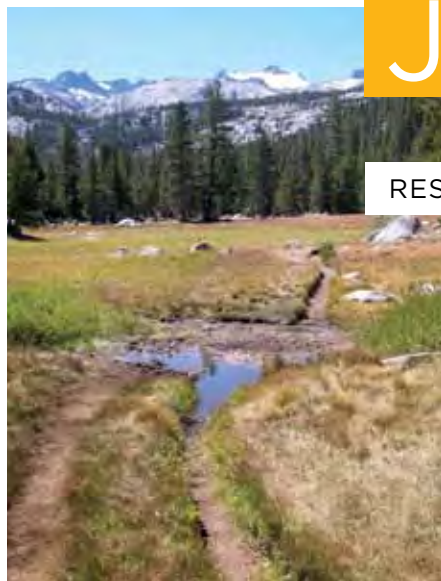
Your support enables park visitors to respectfully commemorate our ancestors and their efforts in building Yosemite National Park. ■

Thank you to Tauck, Inc., and The Heller Foundation of San Diego for generously providing funds in support of this project.

PHOTOS (RIGHT) © JOHN REECE, (BOTTOM) © COURTESY OF NPS



IMPROVING THE JOHN MUIR TRAIL



RESTORING HABITAT FOR VISITORS AND WILDLIFE

Imagine hiking under a clear blue sky, taking in the majestic peaks and rolling meadows of Yosemite's backcountry, when, suddenly, the trail leads you into the middle of a muddy trench. Unfortunately, many visitors have this experience along the popular John Muir Trail in Lyell Canyon. A series of trail ruts are disrupting hikers and affecting the overall health of the meadow and wildlife habitat.

Over time, these ruts have multiplied, as hikers and stock animals attempt to avoid the trail's deteriorated sections. The deep ruts have affected the meadow's natural hydrology, drying out native vegetation and leading to changes in plant and animal communities.

Your support makes it possible to reroute the trail out of sensitive wetland habitat. Trail crews will move several sections to more sustainable areas, while restoration crews will restore the meadow. When this project concludes at the end of 2013, visitors will experience a healthier ecosystem while hiking on an improved trail. ■

TOP View from Lyell Canyon looking south toward Mt. Lyell, the Lyell Glacier, and Mt. Maclure. **BOTTOM** Trail ruts in the John Muir Trail in Lyell Canyon disrupt natural hydrology and make visitor access difficult.



PHOTOS: © KEITH WALKLET

SAVING A KEYSTONE SPECIES

PROTECTING THE SIERRA NEVADA

YELLOW-LEGGED FROG

ABOVE Middle-school students learn about field science and conservation efforts for Yosemite's amphibian species.



ABOVE Efforts to protect the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog are aimed at increasing genetic diversity within Yosemite.

Visitors hiking along Yosemite's montane lakeshores used to encounter Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs by the hundreds. Sadly, this species is now in decline and in danger of extinction due to the introduction of non-native fish, the spread of disease and other environmental factors.

Yosemite Conservancy donors are funding project grants that provide for the reintroduction of three Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog populations to encourage greater genetic diversity of this keystone species. By encouraging diversity, frog populations can better respond to changing conditions such as climate change and disease. Donor funding is also allowing middle-school students to participate in a weeklong field-science program during which they assist park scientists in conducting frog surveys. Youth learn about amphibian conservation while collecting essential data about this endangered species.

Thanks to you, we are taking important steps to ensure this species survives well into the future. ■



JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

ENGAGING YOSEMITE'S FUTURE STEWARDS

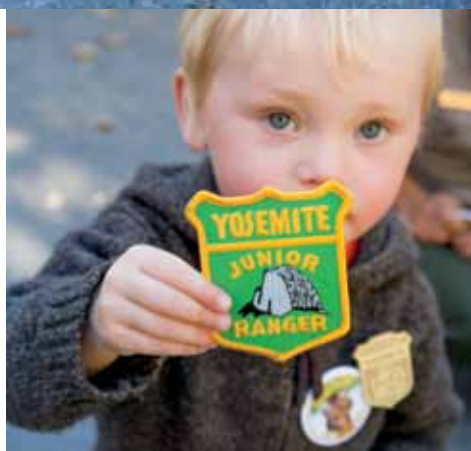
Encouraging young children to explore the natural world is one of the best ways to forge a deep connection with Yosemite National Park. The Junior Ranger program inspires kids to discover the magic of national parks by completing a series of outdoor activities. With a responsible stewardship ethic, more youth will grow up knowing beautiful places, such as Yosemite, need preservation.

Donor support allows for an expanded Junior Ranger program in 2013, so children and families have the opportunity to learn about nature. In addition to the programs that have been taking place in Yosemite Valley, new programs will be added in Tuolumne Meadows, as well as in Wawona and Glacier Point, during the busy summer season. Plastic junior ranger badges will be replaced with new sustainable wood badges that will serve as a model for other national parks.

By engaging in interactive nature walks and completing environmental-activity workbooks, kids are inspired to participate in park stewardship from an early age. They develop an appreciation for protecting natural resources – lessons they carry on into adulthood. Your continued support means young children in Yosemite will have more opportunities to explore and learn about nature. ■

ABOVE A park ranger shares wildlife specimens with a junior ranger on a nature walk in Yosemite Valley.

RIGHT A newly minted junior ranger shows off his junior ranger patch.



A RELIABLE SOURCE

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESSFUL RESTORATION EFFORTS



ABOVE The Four Seasons Native Plant Nursery provides a reliable source of native plant material to sustain park-restoration projects.



ABOVE These plants from the Four Seasons Native Plant Nursery will be used to enhance trail and habitat-restoration projects throughout the park.

Yosemite's habitat-restoration projects are crucial to preserving and protecting the park, while maintaining its beautiful scenic quality. Many of these restoration projects would not be successful without the use of native plant material to ensure the health of the natural ecosystems.

Native plants are adapted to the park's climate and soil conditions, and they require less water than non-natives, which is why restoration projects are so dependent on their availability. To ensure a reliable source of plant material, Yosemite Conservancy is providing a grant to help nurture a relationship with the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and the Four Seasons Native Plant Nursery to propagate native materials. Tribal youth are encouraged to participate, so elders can pass down traditional plant-use knowledge to the younger generation.

Thanks to your support, these important partnerships are emphasizing the connection between Yosemite's cultural and natural resources. ■

YOSEMITE THEATER

LIVE SHOWS SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK



ABOVE Park ranger Shelton Johnson depicts the experiences of an African-American cavalryman stationed in Yosemite in the early 20th century.

ABOVE During *Conversation with a Tramp: An Evening with John Muir*, the audience is transported to John Muir's study, as he intimately recounts the last great battle of his life as a conservationist.

This summer, take in a live theater performance, and revel as the park's cultural history comes to life before your eyes! History and adventure are featured seven nights a week from April through early November at the Yosemite Theater.

Park ranger Shelton Johnson reprises his role as an African-American cavalryman in *The Forgotten Yosemite: A Buffalo Soldier Remembers*. This moving story follows one soldier's experience patrolling Yosemite's wilderness in the early 20th century. The once-forgotten cultural legacy is revived and brought to life through a captivating historic portrayal that evokes the spirit of a Buffalo Soldier.

For another live offering, see veteran performer Lee Stetson take the stage as Yosemite champion John Muir in two separate performances depicting events inspired by Muir's writings. In *Conversation with a Tramp: An Evening with John Muir*, you will be drawn into the dramatic battle for Hetch Hetchy Valley. In *John Muir Among the Animals*, you can accompany Muir on his thrilling adventures through Yosemite, including encounters with wild creatures. ■



Join us this summer for an unforgettable live performance. Learn more about arts in Yosemite on our website yosemiteconservancy.org

THE STORY OF YOSEMITE

REVEALED BY EXPERT HISTORIANS, PHOTOGRAPHERS,
CULTURAL DEMONSTRATORS AND NATURALISTS

“I want visitors
to feel a
connection to
this place.”

— **DAVID LUKAS**
Outdoor Adventures
Naturalist & Author



“I want visitors to feel a connection to this place,” says David Lukas, Outdoor Adventures naturalist and author of multiple books on the natural history of the Sierra Nevada. “Wandering among the peaks and valleys of Yosemite, I feel the wonder of this place never stops. I want to share that feeling with others.”

Yosemite National Park is rich with cultural and natural histories waiting to be revealed during Yosemite Conservancy Outdoor Adventures. These programs give visitors a rare opportunity to experience Yosemite’s wilderness, geology, history and culture in small groups led by experts.

“Yosemite Conservancy’s Outdoor Adventures create a deeper connection between visitors and the park, which encourages stewardship of this one-of-



LEFT A proud participant shows off her handmade basket during an Outdoor Adventures basket-weaving program. **MIDDLE** An Outdoor Adventures participant admires Nevada Fall and Liberty Cap from the John Muir Trail. **RIGHT** Outdoor Adventures geologists lead programs in Tuolumne Meadows.

PHOTOS: (LEFT) © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY. (MIDDLE & RIGHT) © KEITH WALKLET.

kind natural treasure,” says Don Neubacher, superintendent of Yosemite National Park.

To see Yosemite through the eyes of a naturalist is to see a living symphony, formed slowly through the ages. A naturalist can transform geology into poetry, such as when Muir personified the effect of Yosemite glaciers on the landscape: “Brooding above predestined rocks unknown to light ... working on unwearied through unmeasured times, unhalting as the stars, until at length ... their mountains brought forth, homes made for the meadows ... calm as when they came as crystals from the sky, they depart.” Backpacking to Lyell Glacier or summiting Mt. Conness with a Conservancy naturalist reveals

not only beautiful scenery, but intimate details about the very forces that shaped Yosemite.

Yosemite Conservancy is offering more than 45 unique adventures to explore the park. Outdoor Adventures are guided by expert naturalists, American Indian cultural demonstrators and Yosemite historians who are passionate about sharing their knowledge and experience with you. Each program has a maximum capacity of 15 participants and will often sell out, so register early for one of these adventures today, and deepen your understanding of this remarkable place. ■



Register online at yosemiteconservancy.org/adventures

THANK YOU

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Yosemite Conservancy is extremely grateful to acknowledge the John Muir Heritage Society and Joseph Le Conte Legacy Society donors, foundations, corporations and volunteers that supported our work from January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2012. Donors of \$25 or more are listed in the Honor Register at the Valley Visitor Center at Yosemite National Park. Thanks to our generous donors, we are able to fulfill our mission to preserve and protect Yosemite National Park and enrich the visitor experience — today and for future generations.

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	Kathy Hopkins	Colleen Milani	Randy Shannahan	
	Dawn Hopson-Powell	Sharon Milligan	Linda Shepler	

150 YEARS of INSPIRING GENERATIONS

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

The Birth of the National Park Idea

Yosemite Conservancy, along with corporate, philanthropic and civic leaders commemorates the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Yosemite Grant.

Thank you to our
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ABOVE Gary and Christine at Half Dome Overlook, a vista that was restored through the support of Yosemite Conservancy donors.

A Lasting Legacy

**“In Yosemite, you can renew your
spirit in a very short time.”**

— **CHRISTINE YOUNGER**

Yosemite Conservancy Donor

For generations of the Younger family have enjoyed the park. For Gary and Christine Younger, it is “the most beautiful church in the world,” the place where they bring their family together for renewal. Christine believes, “In Yosemite, you can renew your spirit in a very short time.”

Since Yosemite has played such a special role in their lives — from Gary’s mother reaching Yosemite Falls using a wheelchair-accessible trail, to their grandson hiking to the top of North Dome — Gary and Christine knew they wanted to ensure Yosemite’s future.

Back in the 1990s, they created a charitable remainder trust. “I did a lot of homework and decided it is a wonderful way to provide for Yosemite’s future — and it can provide a tax deduction,” Gary explains.

Through the Youngers’ Joseph Le Conte Legacy Society gift, Yosemite’s treasures will be protected and enjoyed, not only by their grandson, but for generations to come.

For more information about how your legacy gift can provide for Yosemite’s future, please contact Darlene Bellucci at 415.434.8446 x 318 or email dbellucci@yosemiteconservancy.org

PHOTO: © COURTESY OF THE YOUNGER FAMILY.

PHOTOS (TOP) © YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY (RIGHT) © COURTESY OF CHRIS DELL ISOLA.



ABOVE The historic Parsons Memorial Lodge in Tuolumne Meadows hosts an annual summer speaker series made possible by Conservancy donors. **RIGHT** Christopher Dell Isola at the volunteer campsite in Tuolumne Meadows.



Enjoy the Outdoors as a Conservancy Volunteer

After spinal surgery at age 13, Christopher Dell Isola of Melrose, Mass., was told he might never walk again. For an active young person with an interest in the outdoors, this was a potentially devastating prognosis. Determined not to give up camping and hiking, Dell Isola spent many months in physical therapy to regain his abilities. Now, at age 22, Dell Isola is not only a certified personal trainer, novice rock climber and mountaineer, but he has also participated in his first summer as a monthlong Conservancy volunteer.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME A CONSERVANCY VOLUNTEER?

My love for the outdoors. While researching volunteer opportunities, I discovered Yosemite Conservancy. I immediately recognized the importance of their work in conservation projects within Yosemite and was eager to get involved.

WHAT WAS YOUR MAIN CONTRIBUTION DURING YOUR MONTH VOLUNTEERING IN YOSEMITE?

Ensuring visitors had an enjoyable and educational experience. For example, while working at Parsons Memorial Lodge, I answered questions about the lodge's architecture and the history of nearby Soda Springs.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT BEING A CONSERVANCY VOLUNTEER?

I enjoy being part of an organization that raises money to improve and preserve the natural wonders of Yosemite National Park.

Thank you to Christopher Dell Isola and all the truly inspiring Yosemite Conservancy volunteers who dedicate their time in service of Yosemite National Park.



Learn more about volunteering with Yosemite Conservancy at our website: yosemiteconservancy.org/volunteer



New Summer Reads for the Whole Family.

Yosemite Conservancy's new publications include *The Road Guide to Yosemite* your tour guide along the parks roads, *Yosemite Meditations for Women* for relaxing by the river, or *Yosemite's Songster* a wildlife book for young readers.

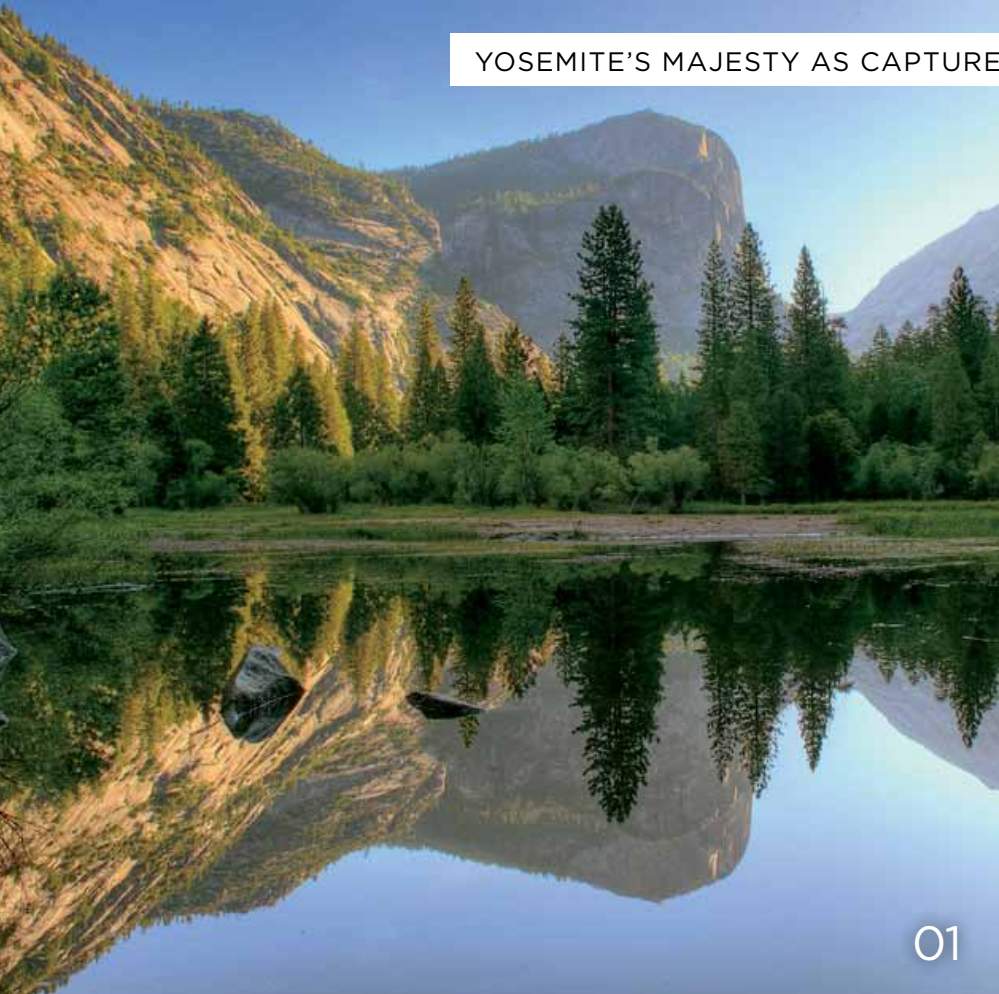
Proceeds from publication sales support our work preserving and protecting Yosemite National Park.

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YOSEMITE THROUGH YOUR LENS

YOSEMITE'S MAJESTY AS CAPTURED BY OUR SUPPORTERS



01



02



03



04

01 Mirror Lake Reflections

PHOTO BY © NIKHIL SHAHI

02 My Favorite View of Half Dome

PHOTO BY © TARA BILINKSI

03 Redbud and Poppies in the Merced River Canyon

PHOTO BY © DOUGLAS CROFT

04 Stellar's Jay in Yosemite

PHOTO BY © LINDA MAYFIELD

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](#) or [Flickr](#) and share any photos of a special place you like in Yosemite.

YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY

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published twice a year.

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YOSEMITE
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It's Easy to Connect with Yosemite Conservancy

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Fax: 415-434-0745
info@yosemiteconservancy.org.

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easy way to make a lasting difference.
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Investing in Yosemite's future
with generous gifts of \$1,000 or
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Visit yosemiteconservancy.org/john-muir-heritage-society.

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Contact Patrick Heryford, institutional
giving officer at 800-469-7275 x 328
or pheryford@yosemiteconservancy.org.

Gifts of Stock

Make a significant contribution to
preserve and protect Yosemite.
We want to thank you for your gift.
Please contact Darlene Bellucci at
800-469-7275 x 318 or
dbellucci@yosemiteconservancy.org
to notify us of your gift.

Joseph Le Conte Legacy Society

Leave a lasting legacy to Yosemite.
For more information about making
a legacy gift, contact Darlene Bellucci
at 800-469-7275 x 318 or
dbellucci@yosemiteconservancy.org.

Gifts in Honor

Inspirational gifts that help provide
for Yosemite's future.
Visit yosemiteconservancy.org/gifts-honor,
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contact us at 800-469-7275 or
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Greet park visitors, restore meadows,
or repair trails.
Visit yosemiteconservancy.org/volunteer,
or call 209-379-2317.



Yosemite Conservancy
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PHOTO: © ANNETTE BOTTARO-WALKLET.

Your Yosemite Legacy.

We all remember our first experience in Yosemite: how we marveled at the timeless beauty and watched the glow of sunset reflected on the Valley's granite walls. Your legacy gift will ensure Yosemite remains the glorious treasure it is today.

To find out how you can leave your legacy to Yosemite, contact Darlene Bellucci at dbellucci@yosemiteconservancy.org or **415-434-8446 x 318**.