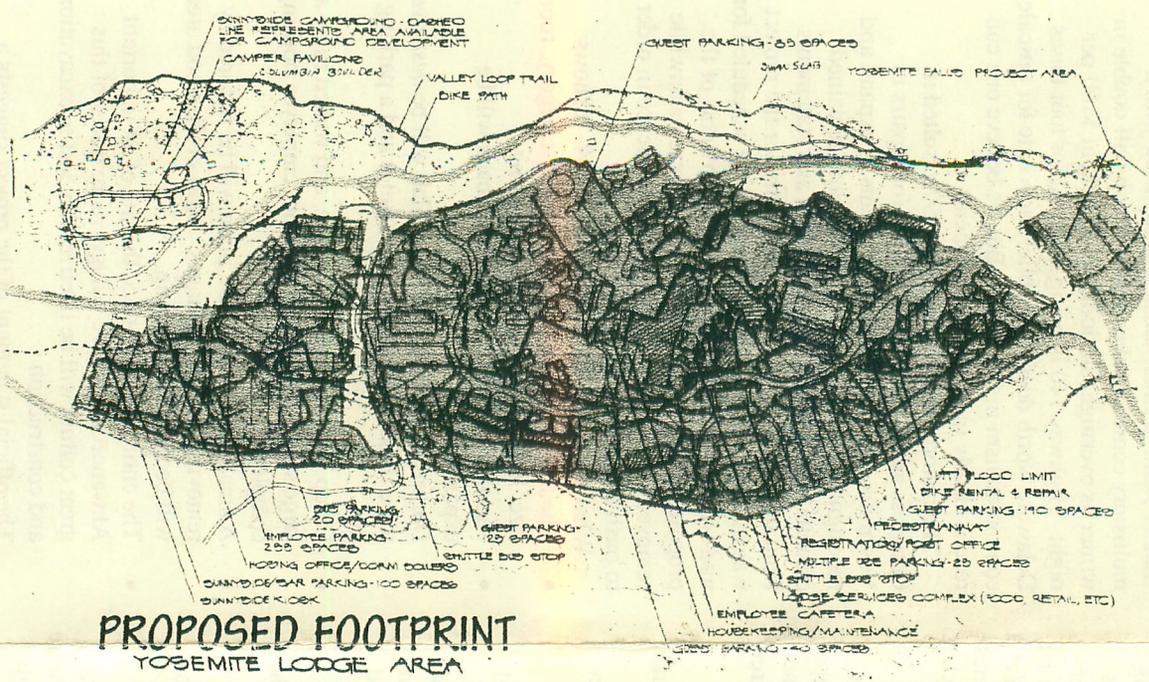
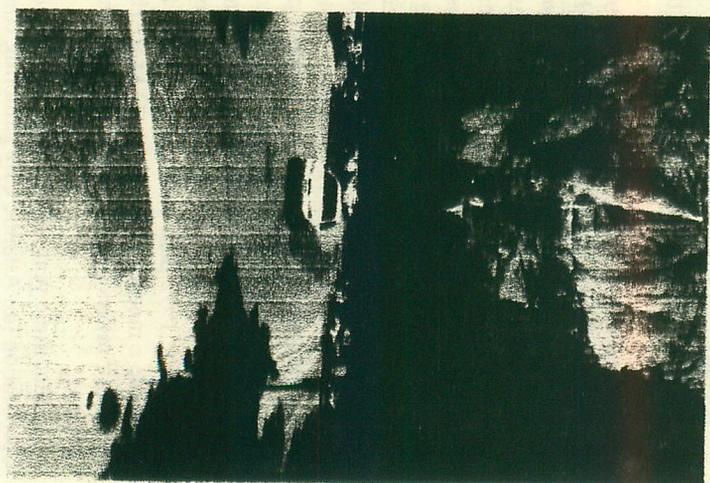


CURRENT FOOTPRINT
YOSEMITE LODGE AREA



PROPOSED FOOTPRINT
YOSEMITE LODGE AREA

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Pave Paradise...

Yosemite Crisis
 Hotels
 OR
 Campsites?

Hotels or Campsites?

From the earliest arrival of non-natives to Yosemite, and with alarming speed since 1945, the Incomparable Valley has been managed to make way for increasing tourism, cars, kiosks, stores, parking lots, and hotels. Urbanism resulted, a place suited to convenience, for some a resort destination, something it should never be.

By the 1970's Yosemite's crisis was obvious. Yet it was then that an expansion of environmental awareness was afoot, and activism was strong. Advocates rejected, then rejected again versions of a Master Plan which would have further abused Yosemite. From that impasse, a broad democratic process began in which 80,000 citizens and hundreds of public interest groups participated over nearly a decade to produce the General Management Plan of 1980. Its primary goals, admired by a broad majority, are:

- to remove automobiles from Yosemite Valley.
- to redirect development to the Park periphery and beyond.
- to restore the essence of wilderness in the Valley.

Still, the General Management Plan was not utopia, but a blueprint for an elected future and it outlines specific numbers for reduced amenities such as hotel rooms. It was therefore *already a compromise* with development. As the Sierra Club said, "It is therefore the *minimum* acceptable standard for further planning."

For seventeen years the 1980 G.M.P. has suffered inaction and setbacks, but none as stunning as the reversal of 1992. In that year planners released the Concession Services Plan, supposed to implement the concession portion of the 1980 G.M.P. Instead it rewrote, amended, and ignored the earlier plan. A prominent example was lodging; without justification additional units would be removed (tents and tent cabins) and replaced with full service luxury hotel rooms. The 1992 plan drew the outrage of advocates, and made a mockery of the 1980 G.M.P. Hearings were called for, rallies and meetings attended, and lawsuits rumored.

In that same year, 1992, the Delaware North Corporation (an Atlantic City gambling concern) was awarded Yosemite's concession contract. The Park selected Delaware North over the Yosemite Restoration Trust, a non-profit group organized by

environmentalists in order to win the concession contract and use it to actively reverse commercialism. Since 1992, pressure towards development has increased. Recently in designated wilderness near Glacier Point, a small kiosk was replaced with a multistory commercial complex which will double in winter as overnight ski lodging starting at \$160 per night. Highway 140 is being widened for tour buses. Delaware North does not publicly advocate for upscale commercialism in Yosemite. But we believe one can read it clearly in planning documents.

The historic winter floods of 1997 resulted in Congress authorizing \$178 million for repairs in Yosemite. Almost immediately, plans to expand and redesign Yosemite Lodge appeared, and remained essentially unchanged despite letters and statements from individuals and groups. Publicity for the project was minimal; public walk-throughs were scheduled for mid-week, and very few people came to know of the proposed changes. The Lodge plans were meanwhile removed from the legally prescribed sequence in order to push along their fast approval.

What then does the Lodge Plan show? It shows:

- The new lodge will expand in every category: room size, lodging, and employee housing.
- Parking lots will be bigger and roads will be expanded.
- Dozens of trees around Swan Slab will be *destroyed* to be filled with luxury motel suites and a parking lot.
- Camp 4 will be reduced in size, and walled in by a large scale multi-unit three story employee housing complex.
- A small area in the flood plain will be restored by removing low cost cottages. Most of the flood area will become new parking.
- The entire area was once the site of an important Ahwaneechee native village; more traces of this great culture will be irretrievably lost to excavation and construction.

The official statement of the project suggests a major restoration of the Merced flood plain with less impact through new construction in forest areas; "5.4 acres of undeveloped but previously disturbed and moderately degraded woodland would be developed and 8.3 acres of riparian and adjacent upland would be restored." There is no evidence for this. A total of 6

acres will be restored and 14 acres will be developed, a net loss of 8 acres. A close analysis of the approved plans also shows:

- An increase in parking (4.1 acres, a 40% increase).
- An increase in new lodging footprint despite the misleading published statement of a "reduction of 55 rooms at the Lodge in accordance with the 1992 Concession Service Plan". The reader will note the current total lodging is 155 *more* than approved in the 1980 G.M.P.
- A dramatic increase in individual room size: new motel rooms are 56% larger, and "cottages" and cabins, the mainstay of the plan, are 143% larger (averaging 695 square feet per room).
- The new Yosemite Lodge will be bigger, more luxurious, and will increase concession profits. Currently, the most expensive rooms are \$100 per night; with the proposed plan, the least expensive rooms will be \$100 per night. All of the new development funded by public money is creating expensive lodging units at the Yosemite Lodge.

The Friends of Yosemite Valley was formed by climbers and others to oppose the expansion of Yosemite Lodge. If the Valley is ever to be restored while preserving access - and not become a gated resort with rationed admission - then camping must be emphasized over luxury accommodations. People with special needs and the elderly must certainly be respected in planning the Valley's future. But the challenge to the great majority should be to meet the Valley environment simply, on its own terms.

We believe that the Lodge Plan represents a turning point for Yosemite. The floods and the money that followed broke an impasse, and what should occur now is planning for decreased development in accordance with the General Management Plan and the public will. Sadly, we see the opposite; the Lodge expansion ignores and subverts the public goals of the GMP. The net effect of the Lodge Plan is the destruction of more than 8 acres of Yosemite in the name of luxury and private profit. The Lodge Plan is the first in a series which the flood money will fuel. Similar changes are foreseen for Camp Curry. An 1800 car parking lot is under discussion for a site near El Capitan Meadow.

It is time to break this chain of events. It is time to do what has not been done and make a stand for Yosemite Valley. Please join us.