United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park
P. O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7617 (YOSE-PM)

FEB 14 2013

Dear Yosemite Friends:

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias within Yosemite National Park contains about 500 mature giant sequoia trees that are among the oldest, rarest, and largest living organisms in the world. These big trees so inspired early visitors that in 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, Congress passed landmark legislation signed by President Lincoln to permanently preserve the Mariposa Grove along with Yosemite Valley (Act of Congress, June 30, 1864). This was the first time in American history that the government set aside public lands for the express purpose of preserving scenic and natural resources. Nearly 150 years later, the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is in need of comprehensive action to ensure that the grove continues to thrive and provide inspiration and enjoyment for future generations. Building on the 1980 *General Management Plan* for Yosemite National Park, the *Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (*Mariposa Grove DEIS*) brings forth a plan to restore dynamic ecological processes and increase the resiliency of the grove to withstand emerging stressors, while improving the overall experience for visitors.

Alternative 2 (agency-preferred) in the *Mariposa Grove DEIS* would restore giant sequoia habitat, wetlands, and soundscapes through removal of unnecessary infrastructure from within the grove including the parking lot and gift shop, removal of the commercial tram operation, and re-routing a road out of wetlands. A new parking and transportation hub would be established near the South Entrance station with visitor information and restrooms. During peak visitation, visitors would ride shuttle busses from the new staging area at the South Entrance to the lower portion of the grove. Accessible pathways would be constructed in the lower- and mid-grove, and a pedestrian trail would be established between the South Entrance station and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.

We encourage you to submit written feedback on this draft plan. The public comment period will be open for 60 days. Public meetings will take place in Yosemite National Park and gateway communities (including Oakhurst and Wawona) to provide an opportunity for you to learn more about the plan and offer comments. A web-based meeting will also take place.

The schedule for the public review period, public meetings, and webinar is posted on the Yosemite National Park planning website at http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mgrove.htm. Electronic copies of the document are available online for public review and comment at the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/mariposagrove. You can also access the document and the PEPC website directly from the Yosemite National Park website. You can also request printed copies of the *Mariposa Grove DEIS* by e-mail (yose_planning@nps.gov), telephone (209) 379-1365, or send requests through the mail to the address below.

Please submit your written comments within the 60-day comment period in one of the following ways:

Electronically-	Post comments to the PEPC website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/mariposagrove
Fax-	(209) 379-1294
Mail-	Yosemite National Park, Attn.: Mariposa Grove DEIS, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389

Thank you for your interest and contributions to this important plan.

Sincerely,

Don L. Neubacher
Superintendent