



## Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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CONTACT: [Press Office](#)  
202-226-9019

### Witnesses Agree Closing Access to Yosemite a Public Disservice

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation held an oversight hearing on the *“Public Impact of Closing Amenities at Yosemite National Park.”* The hearing examined the impact of the Merced River Plan on tourists, local economies and the environment.

Yosemite National Park, formally established in 1890, is an American recreational treasure. Starting under the Carter Administration and continuing today with the Merced River Plan, an anti-visitor agenda has limited recreational opportunities at Yosemite including camping, biking, and rafting. With closed amenities and limited access, park visitation has never recovered from to numbers prior to the 1997 flood.

*“The National Park Service is discouraging visitors from visiting Yosemite through policies that unnecessarily eliminate recreation opportunities,”* **said Subcommittee Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01).** *“The NPS exists to maintain outstanding places for Americans to visit and recreate. It is not the role of the NPS to keep Americans out of parks and it is concerning that the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act has been abused to litigate American families out of Yosemite National Park. Our national parks belong to the all of the American people, not just a select few.”*

*“Yosemite National Park was set aside in 1864 by legislation signed by Abraham Lincoln for the express purpose of “public use, resort and recreation,”* **said Congressman Tom McClintock (CA-04).** *“For more than a century, this mission was honored by the park’s stewards. But no more. This plan would radically alter the visitor-friendly mission of the park with a new, elitist maxim: ‘Look, but don’t touch; visit, but don’t enjoy.’”*

During the hearing, witnesses testified about the economic and visitor effects of the Merced River Plan that has resulted in a lack of camp sites, limited access, and increased costs for American families.

**[Wendy Brown, Yosemite For Everyone, Mariposa, CA,](#)** highlighted the impact of the Merced River plan on the facilities and services of Yosemite, *“We are told that many of these activities will still be allowed, such as horseback riding, rafting, and cycling. This is only true if you own a horse, a bicycle, or raft, and can bring the “activity” into the Park with you. It appears it is not the activity itself that is harmful to Yosemite, but only if it can be rented in*

*the park by visitors who are unable to see the Park from a hiking trail or shuttle bus”*

**Peter Hoss, Author, Mariposa, CA**, testified on the effects of litigation on services, visitors, and recreation in the Yosemite Valley, *“If the NPS does not avail itself of this opportunity to extricate itself from the damned if you do, damned if don't dilemma in which It finds itself, we request that Congress do the job for it by amending and clarifying the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as applied to rivers flowing through National Parks.”*

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