

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Yosemite National Park



Yosemite Valley –Experiencing a Naturally Cultural Landscape

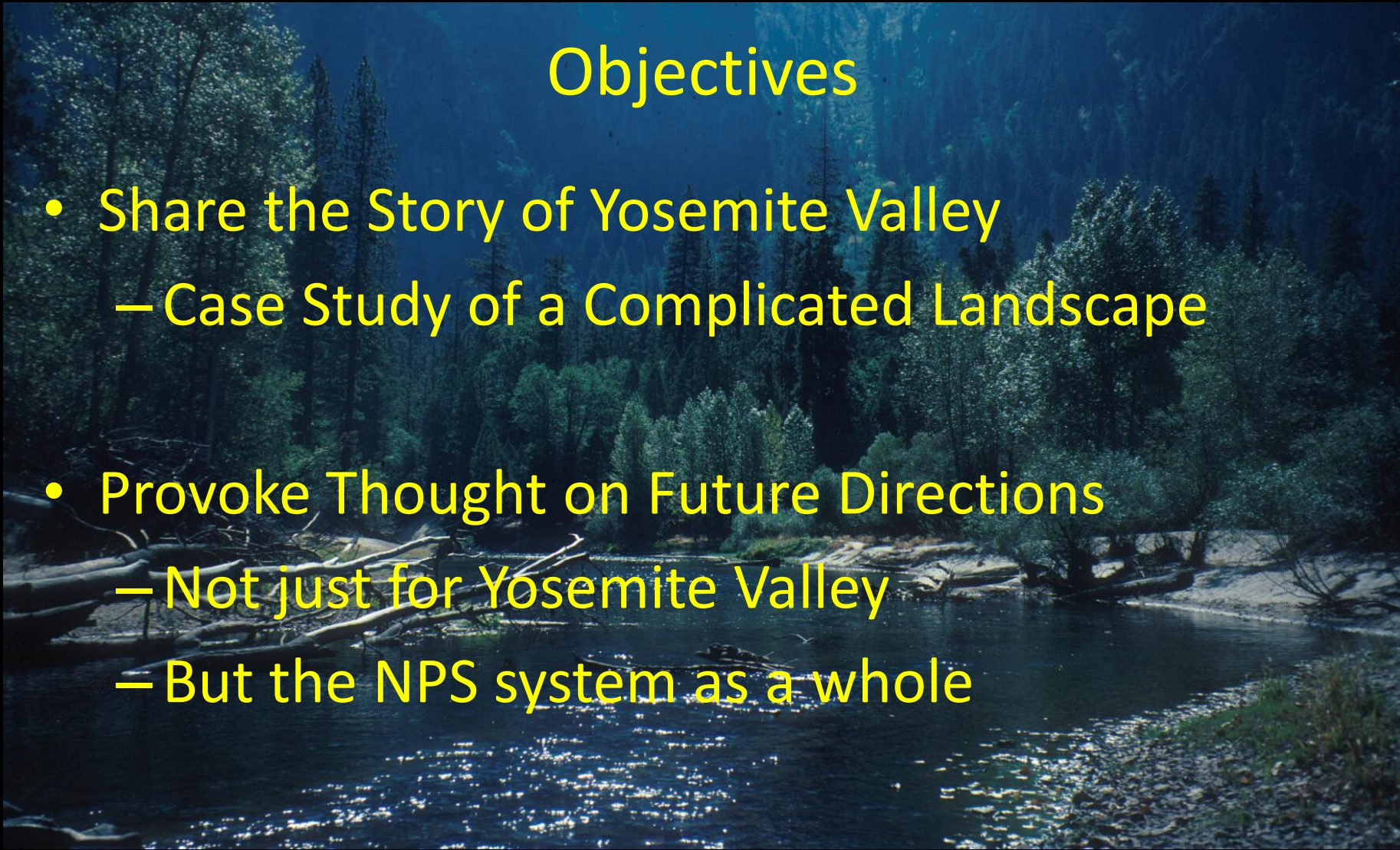
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Objectives

- Share the Story of Yosemite Valley
 - Case Study of a Complicated Landscape
- Provoke Thought on Future Directions
 - Not just for Yosemite Valley
 - But the NPS system as a whole





Valley Sunset, Fog
Yosemite National Park, California
© Christine White Loberg

Yosemite Valley circa 20,000 years ago



Glaciers Created the Background

But Humans Created the Foreground



Evidence of Forested Landscape

Closed conifer forest ... existed around the pond until ca. 650 years ago. After 650 years ago more open canopy vegetation types such as oaks, sage and shrubs were found.

Ethnographic records taken at the time of contact indicate that the aboriginal inhabitants regularly burned the Valley.

Anderson, R. S. and S. L. Carpenter. 1991. Vegetation change in Yosemite Valley, Yosemite National Park, California, during the protohistoric period. Madrono 38(1): 1-13.

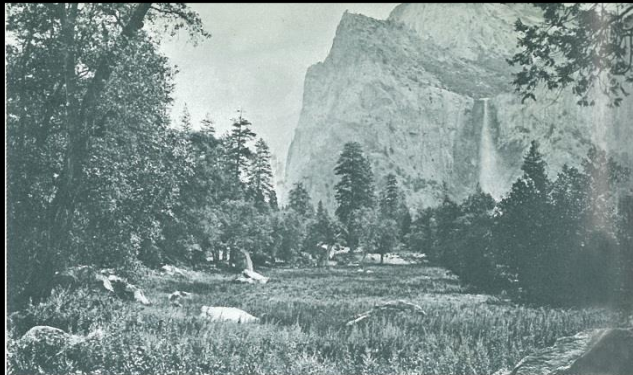




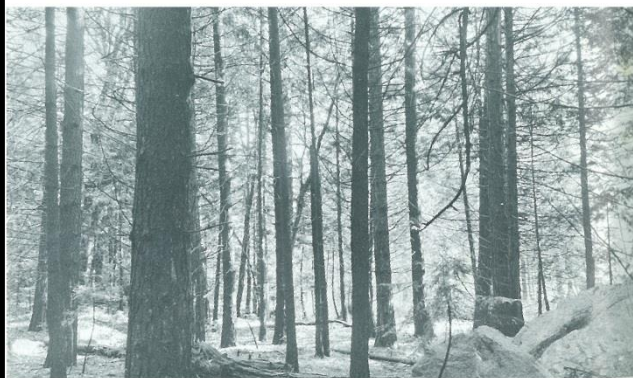
The Sentinel Hotel



The vista-clearing concept was not new to the Valley — in the 1800's J. M. Hutchings had cut a lane through the trees so his guests would have a clear view of Yosemite Falls.



Black Springs, 1866



Black Springs, 1943



Black Springs, 1961

Historical,
Frequent,
Low-intensity fires



Created
forests of
open
structure with
low fuels.

Management Philosophy

1. Reclaim Priceless Natural Beauty
2. Markedly Reduce Traffic Congestion
3. Reduce Crowding
4. Promote Visitor Understanding and Enjoyment
5. Allow Natural Processes to Prevail

Management in the Past Several Decades

- Continued prescribed burning program
- Since the 1990's removal of infrastructure to restore hydrologic function
- Focused on degradation caused by past development and visitor impact
- Conifer seedling removal kept meadow encroachment at bay...

More Recent Actions

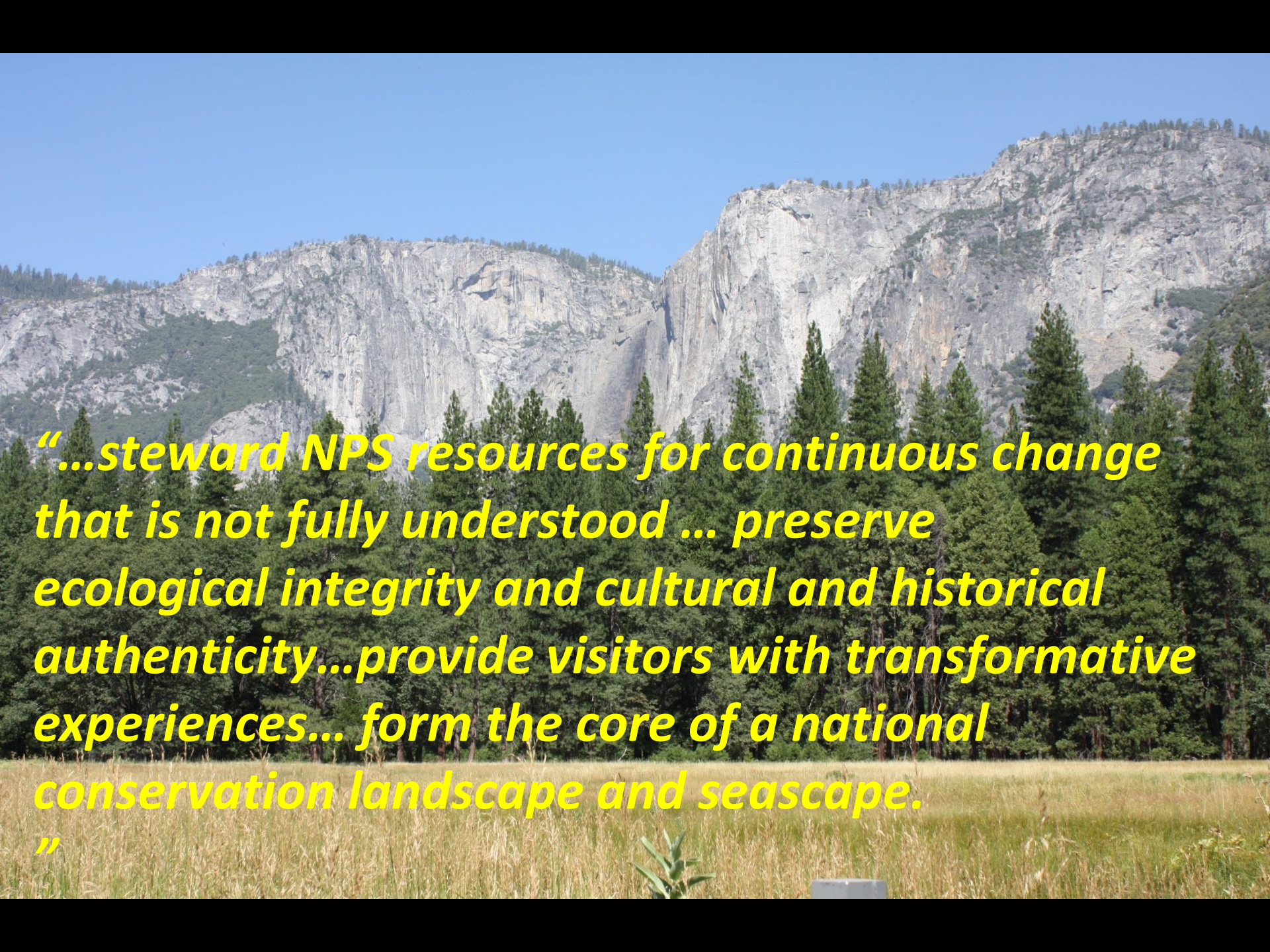
- Stoneman Meadow Boardwalk
 - Reduced social trailing
- Invasive Plant Removal – including Black Springs
- Traditional Use burning
- Caging Black Oak seedlings/saplings
- Scenic Vista Management

Future Actions – To Improve Resilience

- Starting to restore river bank vegetation
- MRP Action – Removal of infrastructure /Riparian Buffer
- MRP action – Restore 189 acres of meadows/riparian



The Task is Daunting....




“...steward NPS resources for continuous change that is not fully understood ... preserve ecological integrity and cultural and historical authenticity...provide visitors with transformative experiences... form the core of a national conservation landscape and seascape.

”

Future Actions – A More Integrated Approach

- More burning!
 - Education for a new world – compressed times for waterfalls...
 - Bioengineering techniques – restore function
 - Consider refugia potential
-
- Do we log our way to more open scenery???
 - Or reach acceptance of a new kind of scenery



Integrated Approach is Key

Yosemite Valley Vegetation Management Plan

Thank You

