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**Subject:** Ten Signature Anniversary Projects  
**Date:** February 24, 2015 at 10:02 AM  
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# Yosemite National Park News

Yosemite Advisory

For Immediate Release

## **Yosemite National Park Commemorates Centennial of National Park Service**

### ***Park Selects Ten Signature Anniversary Projects***

On August 25, 2016, Yosemite National Park will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS). Yosemite has selected ten centennial signature projects that are designed to enhance the visitor experience, restore critical ecological and wildlife habitats, and connect with the next generation of park stewards. The projects will be completed over the next several years and will be combined with other anniversary celebrations in which visitors can take part in. The Centennial will commence a second century of stewardship of America's national parks and engaging communities through recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs.

"These ten signature Centennial projects will continue the legacy of the National Park Service and celebrate the past 100 years of preservation and enjoyment of national parks across the country," said Don Neubacher, Yosemite National Park Superintendent. "We look forward to the continued engagement of park staff and park visitors in celebrating this historic anniversary."

On October 1, 2015, the park is also commemorating the 125th anniversary of the establishment of Yosemite National Park. President Benjamin Harrison signed the legislation, thereby creating the nation's third national park. The establishment of Yosemite National Park preserved over 1,500 square miles of land including Tuolumne Meadows, the park's high country, Hetch Hetchy, and lands surrounding Yosemite Valley. The celebration will include numerous gateway community events and in-park themed events. Signature Centennial projects in Yosemite for the National Park Service's anniversary include:

**Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias (2013 - 2016):** The NPS begun work to restore the Mariposa Grove and ensure it thrives to be enjoyed by future generations. The restoration will restore ecological processes including the giant sequoia habitat and wetlands, and increase the resiliency of the Mariposa Grove while improving the overall experience for visitors.

#### **Engaging the Next Generation**

**(2012 - 2016):** Adopt the Class of 2016 is a multi-year program bringing the park and its resources to Yosemite gateway community students who will be graduating in 2016. This program will develop long lasting relationships between students and the park through a wide variety of activities inspiring ownership, stewardship, and awareness of the National Park in students' backyards. Activities will take place both inside and outside of the park.

**Youth Environmental Education Center (2013 - 2017):** NatureBridge operates an environmental education campus at Crane Flat under a cooperative agreement with the park. This campus serves both the park and Yosemite Institute by fulfilling their shared mission. The current facilities are comprised of older buildings and structures that have been assembled over time and were not originally designed for educational purposes. To address this issue, the park and NatureBridge began implementing a new campus in 2002, which is underway at Henness Ridge, on the Western edge of Yosemite National Park.

**Meadow and River Corridor Restoration (2014 - 2017):** Yosemite National Park will begin implementation of ecological restoration actions outlined in the Tuolumne River Plan and Merced River Plan. Restoration of the natural hydrology and plant communities in Tuolumne Meadows includes filling

ditches along the Soda Springs Trail, removing multiple informal trails, and reducing erosion and preventing conifer encroachment by planting native plants.

**Recovering Two Endangered Sierra Nevada Amphibians (2015 - 2018):** The Yosemite toad (threatened) and Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (endangered) are federally listed with the potential for their critical habitat to be listed in 2015. Restoring lakes and meadows focuses primarily on habitat restoration to improve breeding suitability where each species is currently present. For both species, through successive multiple year translocations, self-sustaining breeding populations can usually be established within 4-6 years after sites are restored.

**Returning Endangered Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep to Yosemite's Wilderness (2015 - 2018):** This project will reintroduce a self-sustaining herd of endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep into the Cathedral Range in the heart of Yosemite's Wilderness, in effect beginning the last major step needed for species recovery. Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep (SNBS) were listed as federally endangered in 2000 after the population plunged to a low of about 100 individuals. The population has since increased to over 500, but remains below the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) recovery goal.

**Camp 4 Restoration and New Campsite Creation (2016 - 2018):** Through this centennial project, Camp 4 will be expanded by doubling the present number of camp sites from 35 to 70. The existing parking area will be improved to include 130 parking spaces. A new comfort station will be built to serve the additional campers.

**Visitor Restroom Improvements (2015 - 2017):** Park management will be replacing three of the current portable toilet units at Churchbowl with a permanent restroom building. The new facility will contain flushable gender separate toilets, diaper changing stations, and will be accessible. Future projects include Camp 4, Camp 6, and West of the Lodge, which will replace or add additional facilities.

**The Ahwahnee Rehabilitation (2015 - 2016):** This project will serve multitudes of guests and visitors by completing fire code upgrades to secondary egress from the upper floors to the ground floor in the east wing. In addition, this project will improve accessibility to persons with disabilities by adding a limited use/limited access (LULA) elevator to the heavily used public spaces on the south mezzanine. Furthermore, two additional ADA-compliant guest suites will be created so that the hotel fully meets ADA guest room ratio requirements. Lastly, the hotel bar and associated kitchen will be renovated to improve visitor service and accessibility. All of these improvements will protect and reinforce the historic character of this unique landmark.

**Emergency Services Complex Rehabilitation (2015 - 2016):** The park's

headquarters for the search and rescue program in Yosemite valley will be rehabilitated and modernized to bring the facility in conformance with current life and safety codes. The project will perform electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire suppression, structural, accessibility, egress and seismic rehabilitation improvements.

For more information about the centennial celebration of the NPS and Yosemite's celebration of the 125th, please visit:[www.nps.gov/yose/anniversary](http://www.nps.gov/yose/anniversary).

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