

Yosemite National Park officials unveil Tuolumne River plan

<http://www.fresnobee.com/2014/03/13/3820420/yosemite-national-park-officials.html>

By SCOTT SMITH

Associated Press

March 13, 2014



Vehicles park bumper to bumper along the Tioga Pass Road passing through Tuolumne Meadows as visitors explore on day hikes the meadows, domes, lakes and streams easily accessible from the largest sub-alpine meadow in the Sierra Nevada.

FRESNO BEE FILE PHOTO [Buy Photo](#)

Visitors to Yosemite National Park will no longer be allowed to leave their cars on the roadside while stopping at the Tuolumne River to explore nearby meadows and admire surrounding mountain peaks, [under a plan released Thursday](#).

Addressing a 54-mile stretch of the Tuolumne River that runs through the park, designers of the plan say they focused on a smaller area that draws a lot of interest from visitors. The plan will create parking space off-road and put cars out of view where it's safer for visitors and enhances

their experience and protects nature. Some 550 cars crowd both sides of the road along the river, officials said.

"We'll fix that whole situation that right now is chaotic and a bit dangerous," said Kathleen Morse, Yosemite National Park's chief planner, who oversaw the project.

The Tuolumne River was deemed a Wild and Scenic River by Congress in 1984, requiring park officials to design a management plan.

Work started in 2005 on the Tuolumne River plan, which included 120 meetings to gather public input. The plan will become final in one month, and work is expected to begin this summer, taking from 10 to 15 years at a cost of \$55 million.

The plan also calls for removing unofficial foot trails to restore 171 acres of meadows and grassy riverbanks. Campsites will be moved 100 feet from the river, and the park will create a new visitor center.

[A similar plan was released in February addressing the Merced River](#), the other major waterway that runs through Yosemite National Park. That plan caps the number of visitors at current levels, adds campsites and maintains bicycle and raft rentals.