



Tribal Stewardship and Restoration of Black Oaks in Yosemite Valley



Black Oaks near Yosemite Village Photo: Mike Gaffney

Yosemite's Seven Traditionally Associated Tribes are working with the National Park Service and others on an impressive project to restore black oak habitat and collect acorns as Indigenous peoples did before the arrival of European-Americans.

For generations, black oak groves in Yosemite Valley and Hetch Hetchy Valley were planted, tended, burned, and harvested by tribal members. When tribes were removed from Yosemite, the practice and tradition ceased.

Acorns were a staple of the California Native diet for centuries and are rich in fat and protein, as well as vitamins A and C. Their arrival in autumn was always particularly welcome when the natural abundance of many other herbs and seeds had faded away. Black oaks produce the tastiest of all acorns, so they are especially celebrated.

(continued on page 2)

Readers Respond: Restoration Survey Results

A year ago, we asked supporters to answer a few questions. While we all generally agree that we want to restore Hetch Hetchy Valley without the infrastructure and traffic that so often diminishes the visitor experience in Yosemite Valley, what does that really mean?

Does it mean we don't want cars at all in Hetch Hetchy when it is restored? What about camping and lodging? And what are we going to do about that dam?

In addition to several hundred survey responses, we received a plethora of ideas and even a few drawings. Quantitative summaries of the five questions are provided in Figures 1-5 on the next page.

Only 1 in 5 responses favored allowing private automobiles in Hetch Hetchy Valley when it is restored. Most prefer a bicycle trail.

Some would like foot trails only, though it would be challenging for most visitors to fully explore the 8-mile long valley without some form of assistance.

Responses were evenly split over whether to allow camping in the valley or only in areas nearby. Fewer than 1 in five responses favored a lodge or hotel within the valley.

Almost two thirds of responses favored full removal of the O'Shaughnessy Dam.

About 1 in 5 responses would like to avoid the cost of removing the concrete monolith, and instead repurpose it as a foundation for park services and visitor lodging.

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San Diego kicks off New Pure Water Project – will supply nearly half of City's water

"Today, we celebrated the launch of the largest, most ambitious infrastructure project in San Diego's history. The Pure Water program will guarantee us a local water resource that allows San Diego to be drought-resilient and environmentally sustainable."

San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, August 20, 2021



Recycling will not only increase supply but improve safety on San Diego's famous beaches. Recycling in San Francisco would also reduce pollution and thus improve water quality in San Francisco Bay.

Photo: Wiki Travel



Black Oaks Acorns are the tastiest of all. Photo: Mike Gaffney

Yosemite's Black Oak Restoration Project is a collaborative effort of the National Park Service, the Yosemite Conservancy, the Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) and the park's Seven Traditionally Associated Tribes: **Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians, North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians, Bishop Paiute Tribe, Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a Tribe, and Bridgeport Indian Colony.**

Tribal Stewardship of Black Oaks, *continued*

Although the acorn harvest no longer serves as an essential dietary staple, it's a traditional practice that is deeply enmeshed in Yosemite's history and well worth preserving.

Coast Miwok/Pomo elder Julia Parker describes why she prepares acorns this way: "I know that lots of times I think, 'Why do I do this? We don't eat it every day. Why should I do it?' But . . . it's a special food. It was life to them in the earlier years, and it is still life to a lot of us who want to learn the ways. Who wants to learn to prepare acorn to eat . . . Then again, we should not lose the old way."

Wildlife also depend on the nutritional bounty of acorns. Birds and squirrels cache acorns for the longer winter months, and, in so doing, aid in the dispersal and germination of the black oaks. Mule deer, an important source of meat for Native people, also feast on the acorns. And black bears, who need to consume 20,000 calories daily in preparation for their winter hibernation, will eat an amazing 11 pounds of acorns per day!

Readers Respond: Restoration Survey Results *continued*

Almost half of the respondents supported giving San Francisco 5 years to make the necessary water system improvements. While the City will surely ask for more time, it's worth noting that when substantial water diversion restrictions were implemented in 2008 to protect endangered fish in the Delta and Central Valley, State Water Project and Central Valley Project contractors were given no time at all to make adjustments to ensure uninterrupted supplies for their customers.

Finally, three quarters of respondents opined that San Francisco should receive no compensation for the cost of its water system improvements when the valley is restored. It's impossible to know whether the political system will provide subsidies to San Francisco or agree that the City's benefits at the expense of park visitors over the last century has been more than enough.

Figure 1: Transportation in a Restored Valley

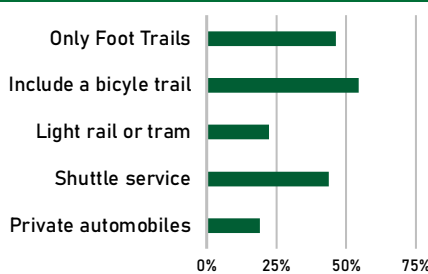


Figure 2: Camping and Lodging

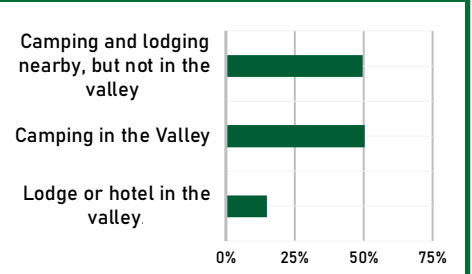


Figure 3: What should be done with the O'Shaughnessy Dam?

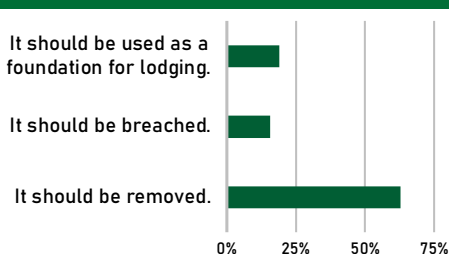


Figure 4: How much time should San Francisco be allowed to make Water System Improvements?

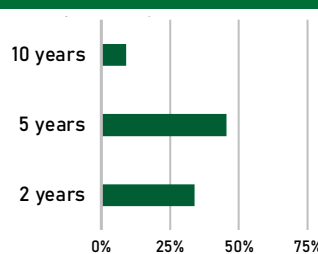
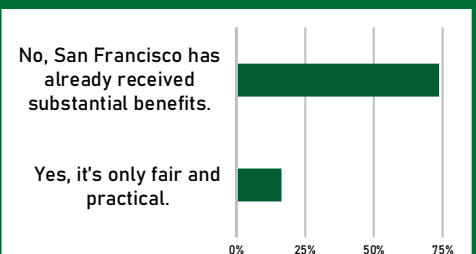


Figure 5: Should San Francisco be Compensated?



Restore Hetch Hetchy Welcomes New Faces

Board Members Lucho Rivera and Mecia Serafino are Native San Franciscans and Rock Climbers



Mecia Serafino loves all things natural, from Yosemite's big granite walls to tarantulas and fungi. She wants more people, climbers as well as other park visitors, to come to Hetch Hetchy while still protecting the valley's wild character. Mecia is an accounting professional in the construction industry in San Francisco.



Luis 'Lucho' Rivera has been a climber since high school, ascending big walls throughout California and abroad. He's been especially drawn to Hetch Hetchy's towering granite, where he counts the 'Pama Punku' route on Wapama Rock as one of his first free ascents.

Lucho, along with Timmy O'Neill, is the star of Restore Hetch Hetchy's new film "**Finding Hetch Hetchy: The Hidden Yosemite**". When he isn't climbing on his own, Lucho can be found as a wilderness staffer/instructor for high school youth programs, leading backpacking trips and teaching rock climbing.

Community Outreach Liaison Mike Gaffney

Mike Gaffney joins Restore Hetch Hetchy as our **Community Outreach Liaison**. He is stationed in Yosemite Valley where he is able to meet with park visitors and other communities who have a special interest in Yosemite National Park, explain the extraordinary opportunities that are at hand, and encourage people to support Hetch Hetchy's restoration.

Mike has a Master's degree in social work and spent three years as a health educator with the Indigenous Ngobe people in Panama. In the Unites States, Mike has worked on trail crews and with youth groups in parks throughout the west. In Arizona, Mike worked closely with the Navajo Nation and the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Mike lives in Yosemite Valley with his wife, two children and their dog.

Photo: Emily Gaffney



Please support Restore Hetch Hetchy.

Together we can make Yosemite whole again.

Use the attached envelope or contribute online.

Ways to give include contributing appreciated stock and including Restore Hetch Hetchy in your estate planning—see hetchhetchy.org



The mission of Restore Hetch Hetchy is to *return the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park to its natural splendor — while continuing to meet the water and power needs of all communities that depend on the Tuolumne River.*

Our new stunning shopping bag makes a great holiday gift.



For a limited time only, we are offering the canvas bag with a donation of \$25 or more. Email us at admin@hetchhetchy.org or call us at 510.893.3400.

Restore Hetch Hetchy

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Restore Hetch Hetchy's Strategic Plan

During the spring and summer of 2021, the Restore Hetch Hetchy Board and Staff, with counsel from some close associates, engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process with the support of **First Principles, LLC**. We adopted an ambitious plan at our Board meeting on September 18, and have begun the process of implementation.

Restore Hetch Hetchy is respected organization—even among our adversaries. We have a clear goal of making Yosemite National Park whole once again while pursuing and supporting sensible water system improvements for San Francisco and all communities that depend on the Tuolumne River. Leading politicians of both major parties, water utility experts, many in the media and others understand restoration is a practical idea whose time has come. Those politicians have indicated they need to see a “groundswell” of support before they are willing to take action.

We embrace the notion of broadening our outreach with clear and compelling messages. At a time when national parks are more popular than ever, we want to include a greater number of diverse communities that would benefit from a reimagined national park that is less dependent on outdated infrastructure and truly reflects Yosemite's natural heritage.

We recognize that some city leaders in San Francisco will be the last to support restoration, but pressure from both within and outside will lessen their resistance. Eventually San Francisco will be able to point to restoration with pride, as it continues to depend on water supplies from the Tuolumne River—albeit stored downstream of Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Our strategic plan provides a blueprint for success. We are excited and committed to moving forward. For a (partially redacted) copy of the final plan, email spreck@hetchhetchy.org.



Spreck Rosekrans
Executive Director



Two views of Wapama Falls. The bridges across the base are being improved so closures for safety can be avoided. The top requires off trail hiking and is visited rarely.

Photos: Chris Burkard