



Working with the National Park Service — progress to date and progress to come



When we told the National Park Service that there should be signs along highway 120 pointing to Yosemite National Park’s Hetch Hetchy entrance, they told us to talk to Caltrans. We did. Problem solved!

(continued on page 2)

Since publishing *Keeping Promises: Providing Public Access to Hetch Hetchy Valley, Yosemite National Park* in 2021, Restore Hetch Hetchy has collaborated with the National Park Service to enhance the visitor experience at Hetch Hetchy. Our goal is to encourage visitors to experience Hetch Hetchy firsthand, to witness its restoration potential, and to fully enjoy the area during their visit.

We’re pleased with the progress we’ve made. The National Park Service has:

- Extended hours of access through the Hetch Hetchy entrance.
- Given Hetch Hetchy special consideration in its reservation system.
- Repaired the dangerous bridge at Wapama Falls.
- Instructed San Francisco to provide potable water to the campground at Hetch Hetchy, fulfilling a requirement of the Raker Act 113 years later.

We are pleased that Hetch Hetchy is indeed more popular than ever. Due to limited parking and lack of public transportation, however, there is a downside—Hetch Hetchy has been filling up, especially on weekends in the late spring and early summer when the waterfalls are at their best. (Go early or midweek if possible.)

Good but not truly special—getting the word out about San Francisco’s water quality

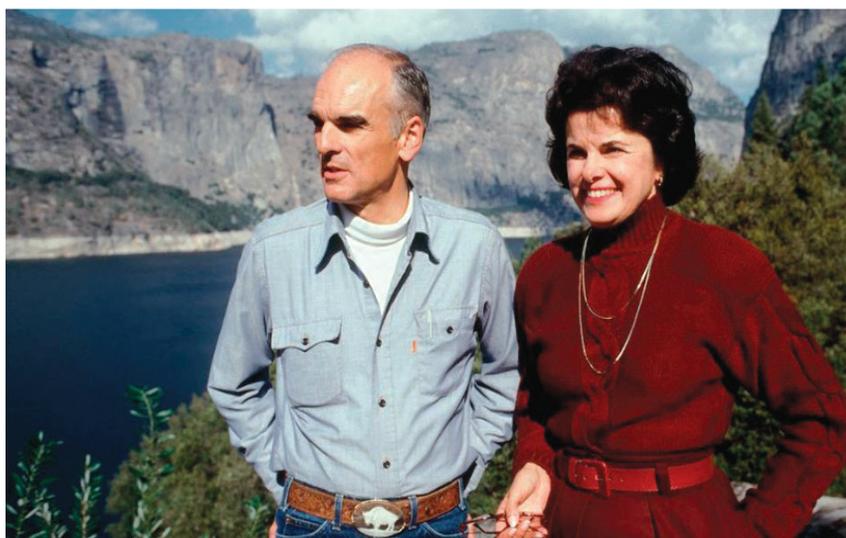
We’ve been getting the word out, ever since our double-blind water taste test indicated that people prefer the taste of water provided by agencies in the East Bay and Marin County to that provided by San Francisco.

It’s a key point. Former U.S. Senator and San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein was far from the only one using water quality as part of a rationale for opposing the restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley. Restaurants, local television and too many citizens have been misled by a century of hyperbole.

They need to learn the truth:

- San Francisco’s water is good but not truly special, and
- When Hetch Hetchy Valley is restored, the water will taste just as good, maybe a little better.

Most officials and organizations have accepted the results of our study. We have repeatedly offered to work with skeptics on additional cooperative testing, but there have been no takers.



Secretary of Interior Donald Hodel proposed in 1987 that Hetch Hetchy Valley be restored and explained to Mayor Dianne Feinstein that San Francisco would not lose a drop of water supply. Feinstein replied that the quality of the water would suffer and, by the way, Hetch Hetchy (Reservoir) was San Francisco’s “birthright”. **Feinstein was wrong on both counts.**

It may seem unusual for a provocative (yet practical) advocacy organization like Restore Hetch Hetchy to promote recreation on a reservoir—especially the very reservoir that we plan to relocate outside of Yosemite National Park. But large reservoirs are indeed popular recreation sites and Congress passed the Raker Act allowing the dam and reservoir to be constructed only after San Francisco made substantial assurances that the area would be accessible and improved for park visitors.

Restoring Hetch Hetchy is no usual campaign. It's a unique and visionary effort to undo the greatest harm ever inflicted on any of America's national parks. People are so often inspired by visiting Yosemite (e.g. Robert Redford)—imagine how returning Hetch Hetchy to its natural splendor will arouse the next generation.

Recreation at large reservoirs is the norm—California has 38 reservoirs which hold more than 200,000 acre-feet of water. 37 of these allow boating and fishing—only Hetch Hetchy does not.

Given Hetch Hetchy's legislative history and its location within a national park, its recreational opportunities should exceed those of other reservoirs. Currently, however, it offers the fewest recreational opportunities.

We have asked the National Park Service to allow all visitors to camp at Hetch Hetchy once San Francisco provides potable water to the site as required. We hope to work with the NPS and others to improve the site as well.

And there is no excuse to prohibit fishing and (low impact) boating. There is no legal basis for water quality concerns and there is no reason to expect water taste to be adversely affected. East Bay MUD, for example, allows these activities and people seem to like its water better.

Hetch Hetchy will be much improved when visitors can see the entire canyon, fully explore its nooks and crannies and relax in camp as the sun sets in the west.

Recreation at California's Largest Reservoirs (Over 200,000 acre-feet capacity)

Boating, Fishing & Camping Allowed:

Shasta, Oroville, Trinity, Don Pedro, San Luis, Berryessa, Isabella, Almanor, Folsom, Exchequer, Pine Flat, New Bullards Bar, Tahoe, Havasu, Clear (Modoc County) Millerton, Nacimiento, Warm Springs, Camanche, Clear (Lake County), Indian Valley, Black Butte, San Antonio, New Hogan, Castaic, Casitas, Stampede, Whiskeytown, Cherry Valley, Union Valley, Terminus, Schafer, Hell Hole, Bradbury, Buena Vista

Boating & Fishing Allowed, Camping Prohibited:

Diamond Valley, San Vicente

Boating, Fishing & Camping Prohibited: **Hetch Hetchy**

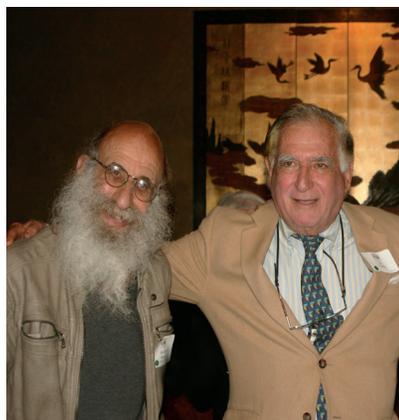


Access by boat could allow access to side canyons for fishermen, rock climbers and day hikers looking for a spot to picnic. Visiting Rancheria Falls (above), for example, presently requires a 13-mile hike, but it is barely a mile from the reservoir's edge.

Mourning the loss of iconic supporters Robert Redford and Malcolm Margolin



At 12 years old **Robert Redford** saw **Yosemite** for the first time and said he was “blown away”. When he narrated the Sundance Institute's ***A Fierce Green Fire***, Redford described Hetch Hetchy as ***“the defining struggle of the conservation movement.”***



Malcolm Margolin, founder of Heyday Press, championed the cultural heritage of native peoples in California as well as environmental issues throughout the state. Malcolm published Ken Brower's ***Hetch Hetchy: Undoing a Great American Mistake*** and captivated the crowd at our annual dinner in 2016. (Shown with board member Jim Fousekis.)

New Faces at Restore Hetch Hetchy



Kathy Joyce, Director of Advancement

We are pleased to welcome Kathy Joyce as our Director of Advancement. She brings more than 30 years of leadership experience at prominent institutions across the country—raising funds, guiding strategy and cultivating partnerships.

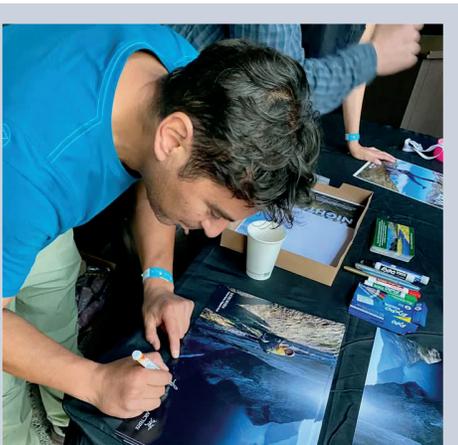
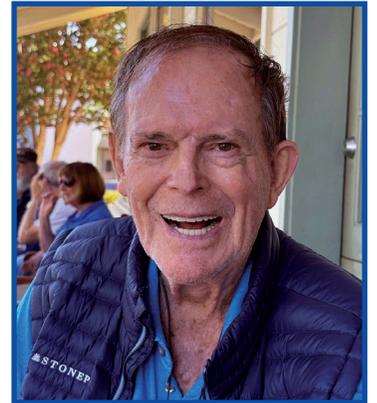
Kathy understands the legacy of Hetch Hetchy and is committed to our vision for its future. She has hit the ground running at Restore Hetch Hetchy as she reaches out to existing supporters and new friends alike.

Having grown up in Colorado, Kathy developed a deep love for the outdoors through countless hours of hiking, fishing, and skiing, which taught her valuable lessons in resilience, critical thinking, and decision-making. She currently lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with her husband Mike and their two dogs. They have three adult daughters.

Richard Morrison, board member

Richard Morrison joined our Board of Directors in September. In addition to his enthusiasm for Restore Hetch Hetchy, Dick has been a stalwart supporter of Save Mt. Diablo, Sea Turtle Restoration Project, and the UC Botanical Garden.

Dick is a retired investment specialist who founded two money management firms in Oakland and Lafayette. His hobbies include reading, snorkeling, swimming, classical piano, and fly fishing.



RHH board member and renowned rock climber Lucho Rivera signs a poster at Yosemite Facelift. Lucho is a tireless advocate for Hetch Hetchy and knows the canyon walls as well as anyone.

Yosemite Facelift is the largest annual volunteer cleanup and stewardship event in any national park and is a nationally recognized model for environmental stewardship. Facelift also provides an excellent opportunity for spreading the word about our campaign to restore Hetch Hetchy.

Save the Dates

Details to come. Email admin@hetchhetchy.org for more information.



May 2, 2026

Join us at Hetch Hetchy. It's a perfect time for the spring waterfalls.



October 17, 2026

Join Restore Hetch Hetchy at our Annual Dinner at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center.

Please Contribute.

Return Hetch Hetchy Valley to its natural splendor.

The vision of Restore Hetch Hetchy is to return to the people Yosemite Valley's lost twin, Hetch Hetchy—a majestic glacier-carved valley with towering cliffs and waterfalls, an untamed place where river and wildlife run free, a new kind of national park.

Use attached envelope or contribute online.



Restore Hetch Hetchy

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*It appears, therefore, that **Hetch Hetchy**, far from being a plain, common, rock-bound meadow, as many who have not seen it seem to suppose, is a grand landscape garden, one of nature's rarest and most precious mountain temples. As in Yosemite, the sublime rocks of its walls seem to glow with life whether leaning back in response or standing erect in thoughtful attitudes, giving welcome to storms and calms alike, their brows in the sky, their feet set in the groves and flowery meadows while birds, bees, and butterflies help the river and waterfalls to stir all the air into music.*

John Muir, *The Yosemite*

Hetch Hetchy Valley in 1890. Its etymology is uncertain, but "Hetch Hetchy" may refer to a kind of grass with edible seeds abounding in the valley. Original photo by Charles D. Robinson.

2025 has been a great year at Hetch Hetchy. More people than ever, it seems, sauntered or hiked out to see Tueeulala and Wapama Falls in all their glory (official numbers have not been made available). The new signs, extended gate hours, and lack of need for a reservation all factored into Hetch Hetchy's increased popularity. The downside is that traffic backed up on spring weekends due to limited parking at Hetch Hetchy—a shuttle system would be wonderful during these times.

Our work with the National Park Service has been stymied as there was no permanent Superintendent during the spring or summer—and of course no staff at all during the government shutdown. Our serious conversation about the legal rationale for prohibiting boating and fishing has been delayed. We hope to have it soon.

It's been fun getting the word out about the taste test—something we probably should have done long ago. We did not expect San Francisco to come in third place—we merely expected the results to be balanced. **Either way, the taste of water is clearly no reason to oppose the restoration of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park!**

Too many of San Francisco's customers, however, still identify their water with "Hetch Hetchy". Who does that? Who else names their water after a place where it is stored? We are battling a century of marketing that began in 1913 when San Francisco fought so hard to build a dam inside Yosemite. The City needs to understand that there are plentiful alternatives for storing Tuolumne River water. The only thing that is truly special about Hetch Hetchy is the unique and irreplaceable valley that lies beneath the reservoir.



*Spreck Rosekrans,
Executive Director*