

YOSEMITE - A FORCED 'GOODBYE' TO TOURISTS?



One of the most admired national parks in the world, the Yosemite, is in danger and authorities face an inevitable decision: reducing the number of visitors in order to save the park.

The Yosemite National Park undoubtedly presents one of our planet's wonders. Millions of visitors come here each year to bow to the famous Merced River, ancient giant Sequoia Trees, glaciers and striking valleys. Its reputation is world-spread - a feature which is both a blessing and a curse.

Busy days bring as many as 8000 cars here and so much traffic causes pollution which severely endangers the park. Local authorities are bound to act. A series of public discussions are to be held in order to help find the best solution how to protect the park.

While Yosemite is vast, nearly 95% of all visitors (which annually may be as many as 4 million) head for the narrow, 8-mile long stretch of its valley, which for many embodies the most scenic part of Yosemite. The towering pine trees, Half Dome and El Capitan granite monoliths, pristine waterfalls - these are the most picturesque aspects whose value is immense.

Parking is one of the main issues which the Park authorities face, along with pollution, too many visitors, and even annual floods have taken their toll.

The near future will bring a series of public meetings, aimed to monitor what the public feels most passionate about, what they cannot part with. Perhaps an old idea, dismissed in the past, may now offer a solution: visitors would leave their vehicles at the park borders and then simply hop on an electric-powered tram which will take them close to the valley. Such a green idea is well worth the investment.

What happens next is still unclear, yet current situation is unbearable, and the authorities are well aware the time to act has come.

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