



May 29, 2020

Dear Yosemite West Neighbor,

At this unprecedented time of closures and COVID-19, we hope that you are safe and well. We join you in looking forward to when the Park is open, and we can all appreciate its trails and beauty. This letter provides an update about Yosemite Conservancy's plans for our property in Yosemite West.

As many of you know, in late 2018, Yosemite Conservancy purchased 357 acres of forest and vacant land in Yosemite West. Of this, two parcels, consisting of 37 total acres, are located near the community mailboxes at the corner of Henness Ridge Road and Henness Circle. This acreage is currently zoned for residential use, and we continue to seek the best approach to creating housing there for employees who work in Yosemite. We plan to preserve more than 320 acres of the total purchase as wilderness.

As we evaluate our options, we are moving forward cautiously to ensure that our decisions are sustainable and respectful of the Yosemite West community. We remain committed to keeping the community informed and engaged in our process. Here are a few updates:

- **Yosemite employee housing crisis.** We continue to evaluate our property to provide housing for Conservancy and NPS staff. To ensure safe living accommodations in this COVID-19 era, new federal health guidelines that specify the number of occupants in each housing unit for seasonal housing must be considered in our planning.
- **Flexibility for planning.** We recently purchased two quarter-acre vacant lots within the Yosemite West subdivision on Henness Ridge Road to increase flexibility in planning; these lots are adjacent to our 5-acre and 32-acre lots. While no decisions have been made for future use, we recently filed an application with Mariposa County Planning to adjust the lot lines. The adjusted lot lines will define an access road with two entry points and provide level areas on each lot.
- **Yosemite West water system.** Because we aim to assist with efforts to address the housing crisis, we have asked Mariposa County Public Works Department to evaluate what would be required for us to connect with the Yosemite West water system. We are also supporting Yosemite National Park and NatureBridge's application to connect to the Yosemite West water system for their environmental education campus.

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- **More water.** In November 2019, our well driller started drilling on our lower 320 acres; it is about a quarter-mile from the existing Yosemite West community well. Winter conditions forced the drilling operation to pause, and the drilling equipment was removed. Our goal is to resume drilling in June 2020. We hope to locate a water source independent from the existing Yosemite West community well.
- **Fire fuels reduction and hazard tree removal.** In 2019, we chipped over 1,000 dead trees on-site, resulting in a carpet of wood chips on our 37-acre property that increases soil moisture, reduces fire hazard and eliminates hazardous trees.

If you would like to receive future communications by email, please provide your name, address and email address to YosemiteWest@yosemite.org. We will continue to provide you with updates and status reports as new information becomes available. We look forward to connecting with you.

Sincerely,

Jerry Edelbrock
Vice President & COO

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