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## Centennial Challenge News Release



THE YOSEMITE FUND®  
*Providing for Yosemite's Future*

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### Historic Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation to Begin as First Centennial Project in Yosemite National Park

Yosemite, CA – The historic Tunnel View Overlook will receive a much-needed makeover thanks to the National Park Service Centennial Initiative and partnership with The Yosemite Fund.

Yosemite National Park Superintendent Mike Tollefson said today, “This is an incredible time for national parks in general and Yosemite in particular. This project, restoring one of the most iconic views in the nation, celebrates both the approaching 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Park Service and the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Yosemite Fund. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to undertake this rehabilitation for the benefit of all park visitors.”

“A signature view is about to get even better. The improvements will reestablish the promise of inspiration to those who visit Tunnel View,” said Bob Hansen, President of the nonprofit Yosemite Fund, whose donors are contributing nearly \$1.8 million to the \$3.3 million project. “It’s an honor to have this project selected as part of the Centennial Challenge and to partner with the National Park Service to improve this historic site.”

The Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation Project is designed to remedy safety issues, to correct drainage problems, to provide clear circulation patterns for pedestrians and vehicles, to enhance and maintain viewing opportunities for visitors, to provide accessibility to viewing areas for visitors with disabilities, to correct safety problems associated with the existing Inspiration Point trailhead, and to address sanitation issues while maintaining vistas and the naturalistic, rustic character and integrity of this historic site.

The Tunnel View Overlook is popular scenic viewpoint located adjacent to Wawona Road at the east portal of the Wawona Tunnel. This overlook affords expansive views of Yosemite Valley, El Capitan, Bridalveil Fall, and Half Dome. It was constructed in 1932 during an era that heralded a boom in design and development throughout the National Park Service, and helped initiate the National Park Service’s “rustic” design style. Wawona Tunnel and Tunnel View were determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 because of their exemplary park service rustic design. Very little physical change has occurred to Tunnel View’s physical features (including rockwork, circulation patterns, and configuration) since it was built in 1932. The site remains one of the most popular scenic overlooks in Yosemite National Park. Tour buses, tram tours, and single-family vehicles bring an estimated 5,000-7,000 people to the site per day during the height of the visitor season.

The National Park Centennial Initiative is a 10-year program to reinvigorate America’s national parks and prepare them for a second century. The initiative includes a focus on increased funding for park operations plus a President’s Challenge: up to \$100 million a year in federal funds to match \$100 million a year in philanthropic donations to the National Park Service.

National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar said, “With the nearly \$25 million Congress has appropriated and nearly \$27 million of matching commitments from our park partners, the Centennial Initiative today moves onto the landscape and into people’s lives. It’s a great day for the National Park Service and a great day for Yosemite National Park.”

“This is how we put our Centennial goals on the ground and it’s quite a beginning,” Bomar said. “We have 110 programs and projects involving more than 130 individual, public and non-profit partners benefitting 76 national park in 38 states and the District of Columbia.”

Director Bomar said, “We really have to get cracking. Many of our parks have a short construction seasons for the brick and mortar and trail projects and our rangers will need to quickly integrate new programs for the rush of summer visitors who arrive in a few short months.”

The National Park Centennial Initiative provides a framework for the National Park Service to engage the public in its mission. Its goals and strategies will embrace new constituents and gain support from a broad array of public and private partners to ensure America’s national parks continue to thrive into the next 100 years.

Other 2008 Centennial Challenge programs and projects for Yosemite include:

- Junior Ranger Program at Happy Isles: This project will firmly establish a base for Junior Ranger program operations at the Happy Isles Nature Center by upgrading exhibits, providing an expanded curriculum of Junior Ranger programs, and increasing staffing and volunteers.
- Connect Underserved Youth to Parks and Evaluate Success: This Multi-Park project will provide diversity scholarships to underserved youth, and an evaluation of the project’s success for three parks: Yosemite National Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Olympic National Park. This educational program will build on a strong private partnership with Yosemite National Institute’s campus affiliates, Yosemite Institute, Headlands Institute, and Olympic Park Institute.
- Nine national parks across the country, including Yosemite, will embark on a national effort to discover and catalog all plant and animal life in the national parks – technically speaking, they will conduct *all taxa biologic inventories*.

For a complete list of the 2008 National Park Service Centennial Challenge projects and programs please visit [www.nps.gov/2016](http://www.nps.gov/2016) .

The Yosemite Fund is a non-profit organization that provides broad-based private funding and resources for projects that preserve, protect or enhance Yosemite National Park. Since 1988, more than 100,000 individual, corporate and foundation donors have enabled the Fund to grant over \$40 million to complete over 200 projects in Yosemite. Contributors to the Fund provide a margin of excellence in Yosemite, extending a long-standing tradition of private philanthropy in National Parks. Results of the Fund’s work on major projects can be seen most notably at the approach to lower Yosemite Falls (\$12.5 million), Glacier Point (\$4 million), Happy Isles (\$2 million) and Olmstead Point (\$1.2 million). Learn more at [www.yosemitefund.org](http://www.yosemitefund.org) 1-800-4-MY-PARK.

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