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THE YOSEMITE FUND™
Providing for Yosemite's Future

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Multimillion-Dollar Campaign Launched to Save Popular Trails in Yosemite National Park

Nonprofit Yosemite Fund Seeks \$13.5 Million for Trails Programs

San Francisco, June 2, 2006 – The Yosemite Fund and National Park Service today launched an historic multimillion-dollar campaign to repair Yosemite National Park's most popular trails.

The \$13.5 million Campaign for Yosemite Trails is the largest ever trail repair program launched in Yosemite National Park.

“The Campaign will provide public and private funding necessary to revitalize Yosemite's most important trails to improve access, increase visitor safety, preserve habitat and educate visitors about appropriate use of trails,” said Mike Tollefson, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park.

The trails selected as part of the Campaign represent the most critically compromised, heavily trafficked and high profile trails in Yosemite. Work in Yosemite's popular visitor areas will repair the west end of the Valley Loop Trail and restore the John Muir Trailhead and Happy Isles area, including reconstructing the Happy Isles footbridge destroyed by the 1997 flood. In the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, home to the world's largest and oldest living things, the 7.5-mile trail system will undergo repair and provide improved education for visitors.

In Yosemite's backcountry, the world-renowned John Muir Trail, the spectacular Red Peak Pass Trail over the Clark Range, and the summit to Mount Hoffmann will undergo extensive repair and reconstruction. Design will also be provided for key trailheads along the Tioga Road.

“With roads touching only six percent of Yosemite, the best way to access the park is by trails,” said Bob Hansen, president of The Yosemite Fund. “Supporting the Campaign will protect these vital trails for future generations. If we do not help these trails now, they could be lost forever.”

In addition to re-establishing and repairing trails, the Campaign will provide for restoring adjacent habitats, creating greater educational opportunities for visitors and promoting the use of Yosemite's trails.

Hansen said that trail degradation has compromised the visitor experience and habitat tremendously. In some cases, faulty drainage eroded trail surfaces. Eroded trails divert hikers, creating multiple trails that compromise hydrology and destroy habitat animals depend on. Some degraded trails present safety hazards, forcing visitors into roadways or injuring livestock.

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“Backpackers, mountaineers and first-time visitors have reason to celebrate today and tomorrow,” said Royal Robbins, legendary climber and a Yosemite Fund council member. “Yosemite’s landscape harbors an unforgettable grand collection of peaks, domes, high waterfalls and alpine meadows. The best way to see these natural wonders is by trail. I urge you to support the Campaign for Yosemite’s Trails.”

Eight hundred miles of trails wind their way through Yosemite’s valleys, meadows, streams, forests and across polished granite.

The National Park Service is providing \$3 million from park entrance fees to the trails campaign projects. The Campaign’s lead gift was a \$1 million contribution from Fund Council Members David and Dana Dornsife.

“Yosemite’s trails provide families, tourists, equestrians, cyclists, backpackers and mountaineers with the most rewarding experience of Yosemite’s natural wonders in a way that also protects habitat,” said Dana Dornsife.

To celebrate the Campaign kick-off and National Trails Day, Royal Robbins and Yosemite Fund staff will be leading hikes this Saturday, June 3, around Yosemite Valley, beginning at the Valley Visitor Center at 11 a.m.

The Campaign for Yosemite Trails comes on the heels of The Yosemite Fund’s and the National Park Service’s highly regarded \$13.5 million restoration of the approach to Lower Yosemite Falls, which removed a parking lot and replaced it with a natural setting, protected steam banks, improved viewing areas, footbridges and trails, added educational and directional signage to protect habitat, provided unobtrusive visitor amenities, and access for the disabled.

The Yosemite Fund has raised more than \$35 million for over 200 wilderness, wildlife and cultural projects in the park. In addition to the Campaign for Yosemite Trails, the Fund is in the midst of a \$1.5 million restoration of Olmsted Point along with more than 50 other projects in Yosemite National Park. It has funded projects like the *Spirit of Yosemite* visitor orientation film, Glacier Point amphitheatre, Happy Isles Nature Center exhibits, and 2,000 bear-proof food lockers.

For more information about The Yosemite Fund, see www.yosemitefund.org or call 1-800-4MYPARK.

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