

**Instructional Related Activities
Report Form**

SPONSOR	DEPARTMENT
Don Rodriguez / Dan Wakelee	ESRM / Political Science

ACTIVITY TITLE	DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY
Yosemite National Park Field Study	11/9/2012 – 11/11/2012

PLEASE EXPLAIN (1) DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY; (2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S); AND (3) WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THE PROCESS.

- 1) THE NATIONAL PARK CLASS TRAVELED TO YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK DURING THE VETERAN’S DAY WEEKEND (NOVEMBER 9 THROUGH 11). A TOTAL OF 30 STUDENTS AND TWO FACULTY MEMBERS PARTICIPATED (SEE ATTACHED LIST). TRIP PARTICIPANTS STAYED AT THE CRANE FLAT CAMPUS OF NATURE BRIDGE. IN ADDITION TO FOOD AND LODGING THE NATURE BRIDGE STAFF LED A HIKE IN YOSEMITE VALLEY AND PROVIDED SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION ON NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE PARK. STUDENTS FROM THE CLASS PRESENTED INFORMATION TO THEIR PEERS ABOUT VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS THAT DISTINGUISH YOSEMITE AND OTHER “FLAGSHIP” PARKS FROM OTHER UNITS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE. THE CLASS MET WITH THE RANGER RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO MANAGE CLIMBING ON HALF DOME, JACK HOEFELICH, DISTRICT RANGER IN YOSEMITE VALLEY AND MEMBER OF THE CLIMBING RESCUE TEAM, AND A MEMBER OF THE PARK’S BEAR MANAGEMENT TEAM. IN ADDITION, PARK RANGER AND AUTHOR SHELDON JOHNSON LED THE GROUP ON A WALKING TOUR OF SENTINEL MEADOW IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.
- 2) THE ACTIVITIES ON THE TRIP WERE ORGANIZED AROUND FOUR MAJOR THEMES THAT WERE THE FOCUS OF THE COURSE: 1) Parks as keepers of history, steward of precious resources, preservers of biodiversity, and players in the fight against climate change; 2) How to keep parks relevant to new, and increasingly diverse groups of potential visitors; 3) How to introduce parks as places to visit to the next generation of park visitors; and 4) Parks as exciting (and perhaps even risky) places to work and experience
- 3) STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO REFLECT ON HOW THEIR EXPERIENCE IN THE PARK AND ITS IMPACT ON EACH OF THEM (EXAMPLES ATTACHED). STUDENTS ALSO INCORPORATED INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES FROM THE TRIP INTO FINAL PROJECTS (SOME OF WHICH ARE BEING ADOPTED FOR USE BY THE PARK SERVICE IN OUTREACH EFFORTS AIMED AT COLLEGE STUDENTS) AND SOME ARE PURSUING CAPSTONE OR OTHER PROJECTS THAT DISSEMINATE FINAL PROJECTS TO LARGER STUDENT AUDIENCES. IN THE FUTURE THIS ACTIVITY WILL TAKE PLACE EARLIER IN THE TERM TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO BETTER INTEGRATE THE EXPERIENCE IN THEIR OTHER WORK.

****Please attach assessment forms from students, list of attendees, peoplesoft program report**

E-mail to the Dean’s Office
30 days after activity



Nature Bridge – Crane Flat Campus



Presentation on bear management



Ranger and author Shelton Johnson explains Yosemite's history

Yosemite Field Experience

This activity was completed under budget. The initial request to IRA was for \$8,525 (for some reason the estimated full cost of \$13,025 was allocated). The following represents the actual costs and sources of funding for the activity.

Expenditures

Nature Bridge (lodging, food and program) \$7,243

Pegasus Transportation (bus) \$1,782

\$9,025

Trip revenue

IRA \$7,425

Student Fees \$1,600

\$9,025

Yosemite Experience (student journal responses)

Reflect on your experience in Yosemite. What was the most significant part of this experience for you? Why? Would you suggest changes or improvements for visits by future classes?

The experience in Yosemite was truly amazing. I am deeply appreciative that this was arranged by our professors and funded by the school. I enjoyed listening to the various staff explain how they handle managing the visitor experience and protecting the natural integrity of the park. I feel the most significant part for me was listening to Shelton Johnson speak. I'm sure this was very significant for a lot of the class. That kind of personal attention and care taken to convey the various historical aspects of the people involved and the parks goes a much longer way than reading a book or hearing a normal lecture. I am convinced we are a personal species and by that I mean that we only evolve ourselves when it affects us personally. Empathy has evolved out of that and now with modern society, it seems that empathy is something we are losing on a grand scale. This is alarming.

Shelton Johnson didn't necessarily tell you what to think but had you think of it on your own. I would say he emotionally suggested the very fundamental topics he was discussing. For example, when he was talking about feeling judged or feeling like you don't belong in a certain place, if you could identify yourself with the natural surroundings even as simple as one aspect such as a specific tree you can recognize, how that can be very grounding, calming and confidence building, reminding us we are connected to this great planet. I loved that part! He was amazing and I think it would benefit people as a whole if it were mandatory to listen to one of his talks, in all the schools in the entire nation...or world! His book should be a mandatory text for all students to read at some time in their education, like Shakespeare. 😊

Another very significant experience for me was the exercise of walking alone through the meadow on the valley floor. We spent so much time as a group listening to talks, conversing with each other, but when you are left to converse alone with the granite walls, or the crows flying overhead, or the trees, it can be very impactful. It directly reminded me how I am from this planet, I am a creation of the planet and although there might be things that can bring harm to my body in nature, my soul is a piece of the energy of the planet. It was a very profound experience. I would suggest in future classes to do a 'John Muir' type of experience. Maybe have an hour where the students were alone and had to come back with ten things they significantly noticed about the park, strictly in accordance to the nature of the Yosemite environment. Not the history or reiterate what they've learned in class, but what bugs did they see, what purpose do they think they serve in the entire trophic web, what interesting moss they saw on a certain tree...etc. I feel this would be a great thing for a young college age group. You could do this type of exercise and have the students write about it. I would've loved an exercise like this. So many details can be lost when you aren't given the amount of individual time to notice and become aware of the microscopic world around you. I am confident that even the most uncomfortable student in nature would take something very profound from this experience. The most interaction you can give to an individual the better, and although the

presentations from the staff were fabulous, getting people to come to conclusions themselves can be even more impactful. I would suggest first, presentations from the staff, understanding and gaining respect for what they do and the effort they exceed to the park. Most definitely a nature hike (which I know you do and we had snow, which I would've gladly sacrificed the nature hike for snow), then listen to Shelton speak and the last hour before leaving do the 'Muir experience' and within the next week turn in a paper (not too long or stressful, not supposed to be a stressful experience), but something simple with at least ten (any number would do) of the interactions within nature the student noticed while sitting or walking alone that last hour. I'm sure some people would complain or be skeptical, but once their mind quieted down probably after the first fifteen minutes, I am positive they would see an entire world open up around them that they would feel part of, and have no problem writing about the experience. This kind of an exercise could be very powerful for the student.

I really enjoyed our class trip to Yosemite. Many other classmates and I agreed that the trip far exceeded our expectations, and that we had a wonderful time. The fact that the trip occurred during a snowy period made the trip more exciting, and many people feel that the snow was a source of bonding for the class. However there were a few changes that I would make to the trip.

One of my favorite experiences was occurred during one of our lunch breaks in Yosemite Valley. Along with two other people we walked over to half dome meadow. One of the people with me was on her first trip to Yosemite, seeing the view from that valley inspired her to keep coming back every winter. With our first speaker we walked very close, but not all the way to half dome meadow, and I believe it is imperative that everyone get a chance to experience the view and energy present within that meadow. We often say in our course, that getting the people to these magnificent places is the battle; once they have witnessed it, they are hooked. It was amazing for me to see this transition in her view of Yosemite that occurred in that park. She went from not being very happy about being in Yosemite, to completely in love.

Shelton Johnson was the most inspirational speaker that I have ever been in the presence of. Listening to his story about Yosemite was just as powerful as the amazing view from half dome meadow. Shelton Johnson was easily my highlight of the trip, and the reason that I was so excited to go in the first place. I would have liked even more time listening to his interpretive history of Yosemite.

I was very excited to visit Yosemite, but I felt that we did not get to experience too much of the natural wonders Yosemite has to offer. As cold as it was on the trip, we did not go on any organized hikes. Some of the students and I went on hikes at night on our own, but it would have been nice to have an organized hike during the day.

Overall I am very appreciative that I was able to have the opportunity to visit Yosemite with my class mates, and would have loved to stay even longer. Thank you to all of our professors for making this trip possible.

Our classes field trip to Yosemite definitely had to be the highlight of the semester for me. I have only visited Yosemite one other time which was over ten years ago with my family. It was exciting to come back and see the valley again and it even brought back some memories. It was neat coming back and getting a very different perspective on the park through the different talks we had.

I really enjoyed all of the different presentations we had at the park. It was great getting to learn about these different aspects of the park from the people who are apart of these jobs every day and have firsthand experience. Some of the presentations that really stood out to me and I enjoyed the most were the presentation about bears and also our talk with Shelton Johnson.

I though the team that deals with bears was really exciting because I had no idea this type of job even existed in the park. It was really cool to learn about all of the different interactions they have with the bears and how they get to know each bear and their individual personality as they track them. Shelton Johnson's talk was exceptionally great. I really liked how he was able to tie together a historical story of the past and also was able to talk about biological aspects of the park like the plants.

I thought the Nature Bridge campus we stayed at was really cool. The area it was in was beautiful. Even though it was very cold, it was really neat getting to be up there in the snow. The workers of Nature Bridge were great too and I liked getting to see how they educate students about the environment.

Overall the fieldtrip was great. The only suggestions I would make to make the trip better would be to maybe try to have the field trip be a little earlier in the semester. I definitely learned a lot and I had a ton of new information to take home with me after the trip that would have been very useful to use when writing my paper. A lot of us because closer and got to know each other a lot better, so having the field trip occur earlier would allow us to have more of that closer connection, allowing it to be easier and more comfortable when working on our projects together. Another suggestion I would make is to have the different talks occur in different areas of the park. I feel like I missed out on seeing a lot of what Yosemite had to offer. For example maybe part of our search and rescue talk could have taken place at the base of half dome, or along a trail. Also maybe our talk about bears could happen at a camp ground.

Yosemite is very beautiful. I am very lucky I had a chance to experience this opportunity. The significant part of my experience was when the two rangers talked about the bears and the history of Yosemite. It was very educational and I did learn a lot. The beauty of Yosemite might have been the best part of the trip. The one change I would make is that some of the presentations should have been inside because of how cold it was during our time. I hope there are improvements with the dorms because it was cold the whole time and the fire did not keep all of us warm. Those are the only two things I would change. Yosemite's history should be preserved and on coming generation will learn to preserve them.

Our classes trip to Yosemite National Park was absolutely incredible, the park had breath taking scenery and with the snowfall during our stay there I believe it made it all the

more better. For me, the most significant part of the trip was our night hikes and listening to Shelton Johnson's presentation. I've never been to Yosemite and it completely blew my expectations away and I am really looking forward to my next trip there. The only thing I would suggest would be if we could make time to see the scenery more and possibly go on a hike. There could have possibly been ways to work this into our schedule; we could have pre-recorded some of the presentations on some kind of podcast and listened to in on the bus, made the presentations shorter or possibly stayed one more day seeing as how we had no school the following day.

Some possible impossible improvements for future classes would definitely have to be trying to fit a hike into the itinerary and beginning the Yosemite trip towards the start of the semester. I feel the field trip should start earlier because collectively as a class we really bonded and these presentations from the different park rangers extremely helped us with our group projects. Our group sees these projects in a whole new light but unfortunately we have a very limited amount of time to try and implement some of these ideas into our project. Were as if I began my group project with this mind set things would definitely be a lot easier for myself and the rest of my group.

Continuing on from my first point, the most significant part in this trip to Yosemite National Park was by far Shelton Johnson. I have never witnessed and heard a more inspirational person speak in my life, the way he had tied everything into his presentation such as his outfit and the story behind it, his early childhood, the park history and even a bit of information about some local trees along the way was amazing. I hope I get to meet him again one day and possibly hear another presentation from him. Secondly, the night hikes were for me also significantly because being able to witness the wilderness and wildlife I have heard so much about was amazing. Being able to see every star in the sky in such a remote location with absolute silence is what Yosemite is all about.

I am forever grateful for the opportunity to meet Shelton Johnson, aka Sgt. Bowman, sir! His dramatic recreation of the Buffalo Soldier from the 9th Calvary was inspirational. But even more, for this observer, was the journey the development of the character has taken Shelton on.

Let me not trivialize the presentation. The tremendous love that Bowman (Johnson) has for the Yosemite Valley is clear from the moment you are greeted. The ability to stay in character, and exquisite portrayal of that character leave any thespian in awe. His capability to mix history, physical science, and human compassion are masterful. Every time the group moved, you wanted to walk a little faster, every time it stopped you pushed a little closer, as to not miss a single word. He is a born storyteller with a story that is not to be forgotten, this is accomplished in every sense.

Above all that, I was motivated by Shelton's message: dream big and never give up. Once Sgt. Bowman said goodbye, Shelton Johnson told his personal tale of aspiration and perseverance. A student of the arts who left to follow his life's calling of working in the wild is an inspiration in and of itself. But he was determined to take it further, building an impressive resume over the past 15 years: documentary with Ken Burns, spot on Oprah, shaking hands with President Barack Obama. Shelton showed us that with a positive path and hard work, anything

is possible. Furthermore, that fact that he continues to host the park tour that made it all possible shows the granite character from which he is carved.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our organizers Dan Wakelee and Don Rodriguez once again, as well as all of our presenters. Seeing Yosemite Valley in this new light was an opportunity of a lifetime and a memory that will remain for that. The suggestions for improvement are trite and were already discussed in class. Thank you for a great trip!

The most significant part of the trip was the inside look at Yosemite. It makes me feel more connected to Yosemite than I already had felt. Hearing real presentations, from real people who make the national park what it is today was inspiring. I hope to one day work with the national park service or some program like it. I wish I could say I have improvements but I do not. The food was amazing, the host was great, the setting was beautiful and the presentations gave insight to the very institution we have been studying this semester. Thank you so much for the opportunity and I will recommend this class to anyone who is remotely interested in outdoors.

Overall I think the trip to Yosemite was a really fun, once in a lifetime type of trip. I don't think that I will be going back up to Yosemite in the snow but it was fun to see it once. I also think it was a fun trip because of all the things we learned while there, that is something that I don't think most visitors would get. The most memorable and significant part of the trip for me was when we saw the interpretive talk from Sheldon Johnson. He was an amazing speaker and was a really inspirational person to listen to. His speech made me want to go back to the park on a time on my own when I can just sit down and appreciate the beauty of the park and all of the things that come in it. Sheldon Johnson's presentation on the Buffalo Soldiers was astonishing. We watched the video in class of part of it but it doesn't compare to actually being in front of him and listening to the passion in his words. One thing that would have made this trip better was if we got to see Sheldon Johnson on Saturday rather than Sunday. I think this would have made it better because by Sunday we were all tired and ready to go home, also because he was so inspirational it would have been nice to open up with this so we can really enjoy the rest of the trip with his words in our minds. Another improvement that would be nice for future classes is to have some free time. I would have really liked to just sit down somewhere or hike somewhere without the rest of the class. I think that adding some free time would have allowed us to find a deeper understanding of the park and make us want to come back again and again.

My favorite part of the Yosemite trip we went on was the part with Shelton Johnson. He was so eloquent in his words that it made me really appreciate the park as a ideological heaven rather than a geographical location. I was impressed at how well he was able to translate nature into something that could speak to us using him as a medium. He is truly unemployed (I mean a poet!). Honestly, his words really stuck with me. The whole bus ride back I was thinking about

the steep cliff sides surrounding the valley, and how the Native Americans lived in a paradise.

Another great experience I had with this trip was the weather. I have never been in fresh snow like it was during the trip. It was interesting to battle the elements just like the Native Americans had in years past even though we stayed in warm cabins. It may seem like the extended bus trip and multiple stops to adjust the tire chains were annoying, but to me it added to the whole experience of bonding with our classmates. I definitely made some great friends over that weekend.

The single improvement that I would liked to have been able to do in Yosemite is go on a hike. Much like the Channel Islands boat trip we took, I feel as though we spent so much time in the visitor areas that we never went out into the nature part of the park. This isn't too much of an issue to me because I understand that the weather certainly limited our experience. I hope that future classes get the chance to see Yosemite in the snow like we did. Finally, it would have been nice to visit the park for three days rather than two since it was a vacation weekend. Perhaps if money is the issue, students can vote to pay the additional money needed to make it happen.

My overall experience in Yosemite was a pleasant one. I enjoyed that there was a wide range of things I got to experience, that a typical visitor would not be able to experience. I can also say that I have been to the park a minimum of 20 times and there were multiple new experiences. I had never been in the snow and it was a beautiful experience. Also, being able to listen to the speakers was amazing. I had no knowledge of a "bear team" or that part of the village was built on a flood zone. Also, I had always wondered what went on in the DNC building in the village. That would be an incredible office for administrative work. If I could offer improvements for future trips, I would suggest only a few things. I think that an independent journal assignment or reflection of the surroundings would have been a great experience. I believe that it would have allowed for a connection to be made with the surroundings for both returning visitors and new visitors. This could have been done in a meadow or on a small hike or anywhere in the cathedral. I feel like this would be effective especially after the meet a tree game we did with our nature bridge guide. (ask Dr. Rodriguez he loved his tree ☺) But this experience really allowed for a connection to be made in the park. Also, for future trips I think that it would be interested to perhaps have a speaker that talks about how the park is working get its message out whether its through media or other outreach programs. Perhaps they could have showed us programs or other advertising we were unaware of. For the limited amount of time we were there I feel like we got a lot done and learned a lot. Perhaps, for future trips when talking about rock fall dangers there could also be exploration of rock fall hazard zones of the park such as curry village areas seeing as that's still local in the village and it can allow for a visualization of what we talk about. Overall I had a great time and I cant wait to take friends and family back to share my new knowledge.

My experience at Yosemite National Park was a very enjoyable experience. At first I was hesitant to go because of the weather. When I arrived at Yosemite, the weather was bad with heavy snow all around the Naturebridge campus. The freezing weather didn't help out the initial experience. The lack of heat in the dormitories made the experience negative initially. On the second day when there was some sunlight out my experience started to turn positive. When I listened to the various presentations about management, and bears and got to look at the magnificent sights of El Capitan and Half Dome, my experience started to turn around. The most significant part of my trip was taking a short walk out in the snow filled meadows and got to look at a snow covered Half Dome. In addition to that, just sitting in the bus and looking at all the snow covered valley was very impressive. Towards the end of the trip, I felt that our class had bonded closer and my opinion had changed to more favorable. The changes that I would recommend are new lodging with real heat. The fireplaces did not cut it because if somebody had private quarters, then they would have to wake up at various times during the night to keep the fire from dying out. Also perhaps the trip can be a little longer because of the long drive towards

The time that I spent in Yosemite National Park with our class I found very enjoyable and beneficial. This was only my second time in Yosemite and one that I will really remember. I now have that magnificent image of a lightly snow dusted valley walls, with the vibrant yellows and reds of the black oaks in my head. This trip really brought the entire class together as one big group. There were many people before the trip whose name I did not even know; now I can say they are my friends.

The throughout both of our days in the valley it was interesting speaking with various Park Rangers on about their duties. This I found very interesting because I could see how another park manages issues and learn from what they found is effective. It was neat discovering that the park service is all interrelated and almost a family unit. In talking with Ryan Leahy the bear tech, I discovered that he trained the bear specialist that taught me what I know about bears. Hearing about the bears made me what to go back to my summer as a volunteer bear tech; it was one of the greatest gigs. In the small park service world it shows how important networking is. When listening to the District LE Ranger talk about their SAR's it was interesting to see that YOSE had the same challenges as other parks, but with a much larger volume of people the number of incidents increases. One thing that they did not mention in the SAR talk was that there are a lot of certification that are needed to be on the team. I would really like to go back to a river park and get my swift water cert. after hearing their stories.

All of the people we had the opportunity to listen to were very inspiring and made me what to take on more collateral duties with the park service. The most inspirational was listening to Sheldon Johnson speak. I would have loved to speak with him as a park ranger, but as a buffalo soldier was an interesting experience. He spoke in such a way that the entire crowd way captivated and drawn in. I asked him what the best format of presenting park interpretation is, and he told me through storytelling where you state the role that a resource has in the bigger ecosystem. There were many great interpretation skills I was able to pick up in

that short time with him. It would have been great if when had more time with ranger Sheldon and he could have leaded us on a hike.

Overall great trip I can't wait to go back and really explore the valley and get into the backcountry. This trip really refueled me passion for bear management and SAR's and got me excited to begin work with the interpretation division. If I wasn't already going to make the park service my career, I feel that this trip could have changed that.

Overall, I think the class trip to Yosemite was definitely worth the excruciating bus ride there. It was my first time in the valley for ten years and I had never been there in the snow before. What I think was the most significant part of the trip for me was meeting all of the various Yosemite National Park service employees and hearing what they did and how they got where they are today. It definitely stuck with me that most, if not all of the people we met and talked to, started out as volunteers. I knew that volunteer work looked good on resumes for a job, but it never occurred to me that maybe if you liked your volunteer work a lot, it could become your actual job one day. Plus though many of the people had degrees, they did most of their volunteer work while they were earning their degree, so it wasn't just their degree that got them the jobs they have. When thinking about how to get the job of your dreams like being a park ranger, for some reason volunteering in the field isn't the first thing I think of, it is usually getting a degree in the subject and then looking for an internship. But volunteering while getting your degree is an obvious route to a career in that field.

The only thing I could possibly suggest for future classes is to have a tighter schedule. I know that there will always be delays with buses, or traffic, or a snow accident hold up, but I feel there was a lot of "hurry up and wait"ing going on during the trip. There were many times when we were rushed to be gathered by a certain time, then we would stand around for a while waiting for what was next. There was probably extra time just in case people were late to getting back with the group, but luckily we didn't have many stragglers in the group. Maybe having more walking around would have been nice, or possibly going to the museum/ the hotels/ using the tram system/ going anywhere indoors would have been a nice change from standing outside of the visitor center. But overall, I had a really great time learning a lot from a ton of different people who work in Yosemite National Park!

Overall I had a great experience in Yosemite. Although I had visited the park it felt like a whole new experience for me. Throughout the trip I felt like I was truly in touch with the park and I wanted to share that feeling with more people. The beauty and serenity that I experienced in the park was truly indescribable. An eye opening experience for me was during a tour given by one of the volunteers from NatureBridge. He challenged us to walk through the meadow on our own without taking any pictures and without any other distractions and encouraged us to look up at the beauty around and absorb it's greatness. It was a moment in which I truly felt in touch with my surroundings. Although there were roads close by there was enough silence in which I felt like I had stepped into a different world. It was a serenity that is unknown in cities but can only be experienced in Yosemite. I also greatly enjoyed the tour given by Sheldon. Sheldon introduced us to park history in a way that was refreshing and brought on curiosity. I

was intrigued to learn more about park history and those who took it upon themselves to protect its beauty for future generations. Sheldon was inspirational in that he taught us that one person can truly make a difference. If Sheldon had not believed that himself he would not be where he is today. Sheldon believed in the beauty of the park and all that it had to offer. The trip was truly inspirational as well as educational and I hope future classes are able to get from the trip as much as I did.

My Yosemite Experience was more than I expected, I have a new respect for the National Park Service. Since I am an Environmental Science Major everyone expects me to work in the parks, and I have never thought of it as a job option until now. It was really interesting how large Yosemite is; there are so many different management teams! I really enjoyed listening to search and rescue because their job is very active and intense. I also learned a lot about how to manage humans with conservation and that a lot of the times the solution is through compromise.

What made me fall in love with Yosemite was Shelton Johnson his stories were so captivating and he really made you listen. I have never been a history lover, but listening to him explains the history, as a Buffalo Soldier in the Yosemite Valley was really cool! I wish all history classes were more interesting and interactive. It was the perfect way to end the trip! The only issue I had with this entire trip was the bus ride took forever. Next time it would be beneficial if you left earlier in the semester. I also got to know my classmates a lot more, and it would have been beneficial to know them like this sooner while working on our project. Overall I think this trip will be one I will always remember, learning about the management of Yosemite creates an appreciation for the National Park Service.

My experience in Yosemite was everything I expected. The scenic beauty was breath taking as I knew it would be. Classmates and I joked that we were in "Christmas Land" as we drove into the snow covered mountains. I never visit snowy areas, the most snow I see is in Big Bear on Bear Mountain and most of that is artificial snow. With most of my snow experience being in Big Bear, I have little knowledge of what being in a real, cold snowy environment entails. I have never been so cold and uncomfortable in my life than I was in Yosemite. Upon getting there, I stepped out of the bus in the wrong clothes and was shivering until I warmed up in the dining hall with some Yoga.

I really enjoyed Nature Bridge because it reminded me of being a kid at overnight summer camp. The dining hall rule structure was near identical to camps I have stayed at. The food there was delicious and I really appreciated that they are food conscious and fed us healthy, organic food. I really enjoyed speaking with our camp guide Jack, and the other girl who worked there. They had a lot to say and I find them interesting as they have jobs that I am significantly interested in.

The good company and beauty of Yosemite took away from my being uncomfortable. Yes, Saturday morning walking through the icy cold, with snow falling on me was freezing. However, Yosemite Valley was absolutely beautiful and great to look at. The most significant part of this experience for me was the presentation by Sheldon Johnson. He is an outstanding individual and performer who made his speech interesting as he played a character rather than

just talking. He was great with his audience as he was engaging and humorous. Aside from being entertaining, Johnson was also educational with his presentation. He taught us about the time period he was talking about through speech and hands on communication. He involved students in his presentation, while acting as a southern African American man from the twentieth century. Each of us were inspired after Johnson's presentation and could feel his outstanding personality through his presence. He is an extraordinary man with great vibes, wisdom and knowledge to share. I knew that after spending an hour and a half with him. It made my day when he decided to play his flute for us as we walked back to the bus through the meadow. Peaceful flute music leading out of the walkway was the perfect way to end my Yosemite experience.

For future Yosemite trips I will suggest more exploring! Yosemite Valley was beautiful but I would have loved a chance to explore more and go on some hikes or walks. Also, this trip caused great team building and bonding between our class; therefore, it would have been beneficial to the class to take the trip earlier in the semester. Taking the trip earlier in the semester may have caused more in class interaction as well as better group work and discussions. One more suggestion is that the individual paper could be due after the trip. Personally, I could have brought so much more to my paper after visiting Yosemite and getting that hands on learning experience.

I had a fantastic time in Yosemite. I thoroughly enjoyed all of our speakers. Although I've been to Yosemite several times, hearing about the operations within the park sent me home feeling a little more connected. Of course Sheldon Johnson was an enormous treat to meet and see perform, but the presentation I enjoyed the most, or learned the most from, was the two discussions about Half Dome permits and search and rescue. Perhaps this is just because I have climbed Half Dome so I had a personal interest, but I thought it was really interesting to see the data they have been collecting and how they interpret it. I most certainly did not want to perform any skits of Saturday evening, but that ended up being a really funny occasion and I think you should continue to do that in future years. I know other students (who stay up late!) were still able to socialize after it was all over.

On Saturday, although the weather was entirely out of your control, I would say that was a long time to spend outside while it was freezing. Because the first half of the day was so icy and snow was coming down, even though the sun came out for a moment in the afternoon, it was difficult to recover from being cold and getting wet. Again, I realize that was something out of your control. Secondly, I did not feel this pain since I have been to Yosemite on multiple occasions, but driving home I began to feel bad for the students who were there for the first time. They didn't really get an opportunity to see many of the notable sights of the park, and I think I might have been disappointed by that in their shoes.

I loved this trip. Every moment of it. It was amazing to me to talk to everyone and be in such a place of beauty. I've been to Yosemite more than 2-3 times before this but being in a class and experiencing the cold together was a bonding experience. The cabins were amazing. Cold and yet warm at the same time. The people were sweet and informative. Both days added to the experience. I wish we could of gone twice or done more camp outs in parks throughout

the semester. I feel like I learned the most on this trip about the National Parks than I could in a class room. It's almost impossible to mimic the experience in class. The bear trackers, the SAR team... Sheldon Johnson was amazing. A truly inspirations person. THE FOOD WAS AMAZING. I mean that in the fact that other trips the providers tend to not give options for people with allergies or vegetarian lifestyles this was a BLESSED trip. I wouldn't of changed a thing.... except a week long and um... yeah that's it!!! Was WONDERFUL!