

Project Fact Sheet: Yosemite Falls

Yosemite Falls

Yosemite National Park
www.yosemitefund.org

Restoration

Started: June 2002
Completed: April 18, 2005

Cost

\$13.5 million total

Total Stonework Tonnage

1843 tons

Landscape Architect

Lawrence Halprin

Stonemasonry

QuarryHouse
217 San Anselmo Ave. , Ste. C
San Anselmo , CA 94960
Phone: 415-482-9094

www.quarryhouseinc.com

Project Manager

David Elkington

Superintendent

Jason Joplin

Number of crew members: 30

History of Yosemite Falls

Yosemite Falls is home to North America 's highest waterfall, which cascades 2,425 feet over a massive granite cliff to the valley floor in Yosemite National Park . Since 1855 when the first tourists began to arrive in Yosemite Valley , the Falls have inspired awe, as well as artistic endeavors. In fact, sketches and paintings of the Falls helped encourage Congress and Abraham Lincoln to set aside Yosemite Valley as the first preserved natural area in the U.S. in 1864. Since then, a steady stream of tourists, including today's 3.5 million annual visitors, has led to overcrowding and deterioration of the natural habitat.

Restoration Overview

To increase visitor access and educational opportunities while protecting and preserving the natural habitat and cultural history of Yosemite Falls , the Yosemite Fund, a nonprofit foundation devoted to protecting, preserving and restoring Yosemite National Park , teamed up with the National Park Service and renowned landscape architect Lawrence Halprin to redesign the area. The goals of the project included improving vistas, creating visitor amenities that blend with the natural surroundings, and providing access for the disabled.

QuarryHouse Involvement

From the steep granite wall behind the Falls to the huge boulder at the base that contains acorn-grinding mortar holes left by Native American inhabitants, stone is a dominant presence at Yosemite Falls . Accordingly, stonework was an essential

component of Halprin's plan to restore the natural habitat and create amenities that blend seamlessly with the natural surroundings.

Halprin hired QuarryHouse artisans to create natural stone constellations to direct visitors away from fragile forest and stream habitats , as well as s ix walking bridges, a new bus stop and restroom, an amphitheater and a network of benches and retaining walls . A major challenge of the project was emulating the stonework of Works Project Administration (WPA)-era masons, who constructed the existing amenities in the 1930s. The resulting stone structures look as though they have been there all along, yet will last several centuries instead of several decades.

Key Stonework Restoration Elements:

- Boulders to direct visitors away from vulnerable areas
- Restrooms constructed to blend with the natural surroundings
- Shuttle stop and visitor staging area at eastern trailhead to better distribute foot traffic
- Amphitheater and a network of benches to serve as key viewing points for both the Lower and Upper Falls

[download pdf version](#)

