

Halt ordered to Yosemite construction

8 November 2006

A federal judge in Fresno, Calif., has ordered a halt to nine construction projects in Yosemite Valley.

Judge Anthony Ishii ordered in his 25-page ruling and end to roadwork, hotel renovations, construction of new RV sites and other projects involved in a \$423 million plan to renovate visitor facilities, the Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday.

Ishii said the park's plans violated the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and its river protection plan failed to adhere to federal environmental rules.

Park officials said the litigation was the result of efforts from "fringe" environmental groups to interrupt the progress of the renovations.

"These are projects the public has told us they want," said park spokesman Scott Gediman.

However, members of Friends of Yosemite Valley said the legal battle was an attempt to stop environmental degradation in the valley.

"We hope for a park that has meaningful environmental protection and equitable social access," he said. "What we've seen instead is this pandering to commercialism, this rush to do construction and this shortchanging of environmental laws."

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