

# UC Berkeley

## Places

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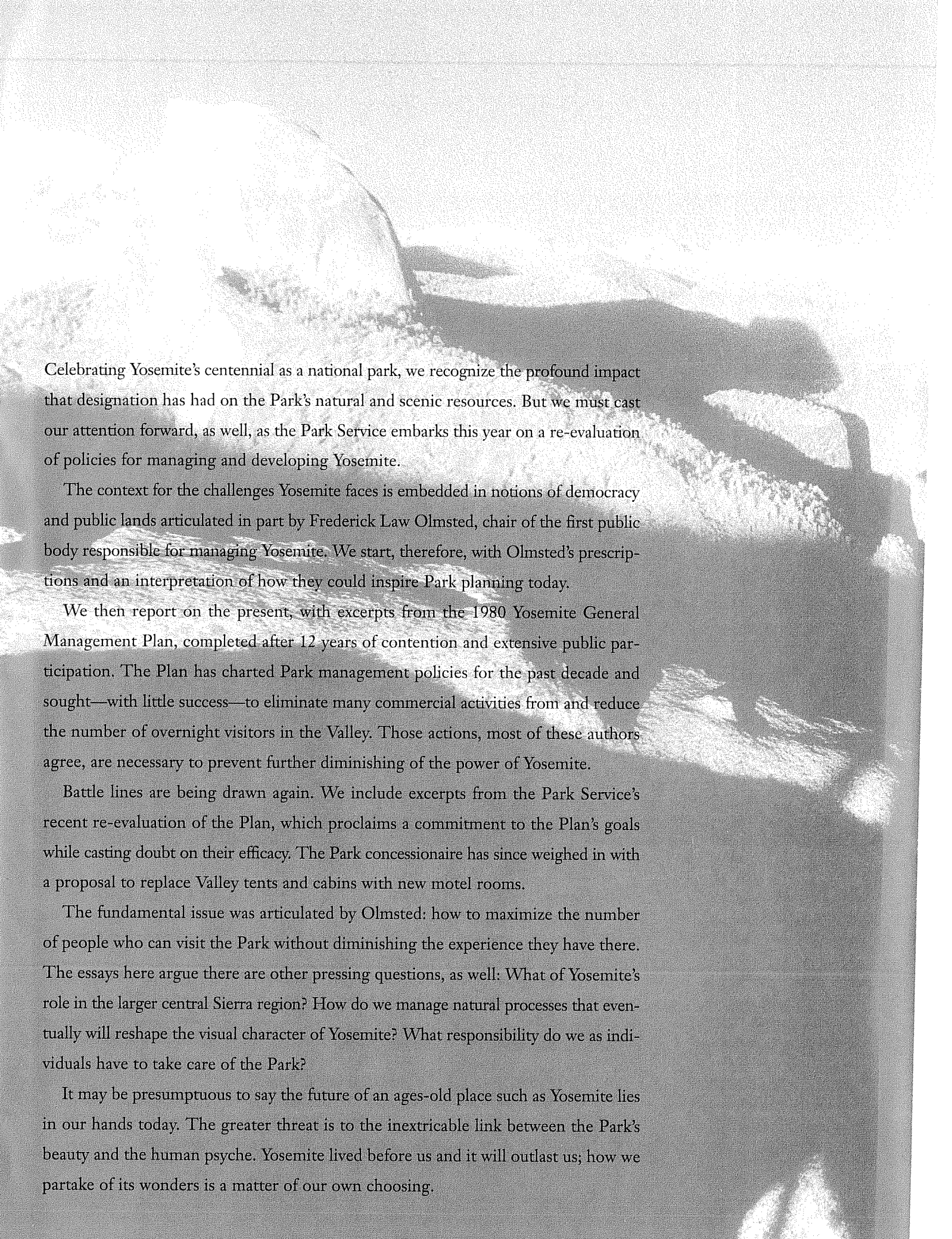
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Celebrating Yosemite's centennial as a national park, we recognize the profound impact that designation has had on the Park's natural and scenic resources. But we must cast our attention forward, as well, as the Park Service embarks this year on a re-evaluation of policies for managing and developing Yosemite.

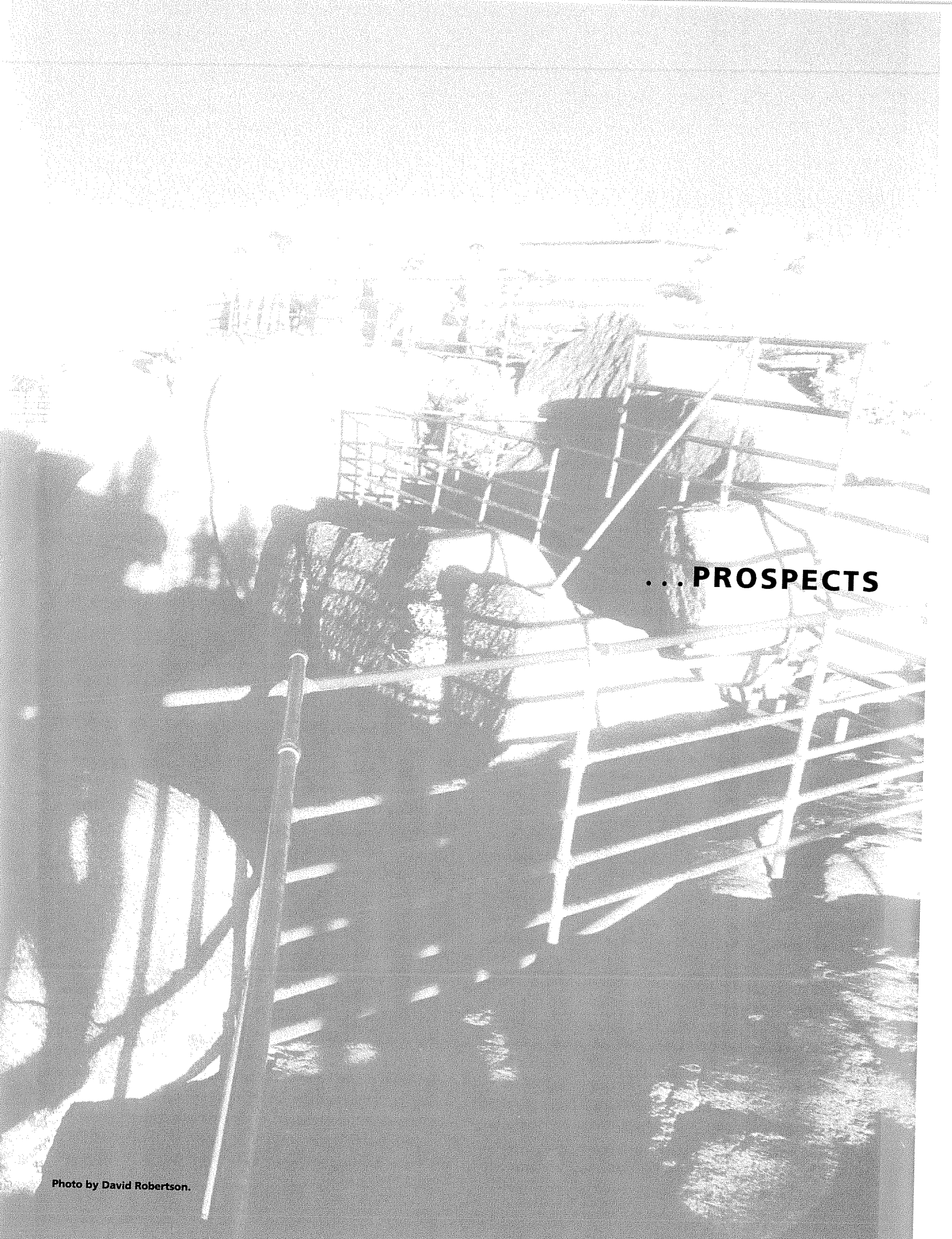
The context for the challenges Yosemite faces is embedded in notions of democracy and public lands articulated in part by Frederick Law Olmsted, chair of the first public body responsible for managing Yosemite. We start, therefore, with Olmsted's prescriptions and an interpretation of how they could inspire Park planning today.

We then report on the present, with excerpts from the 1980 Yosemite General Management Plan, completed after 12 years of contention and extensive public participation. The Plan has charted Park management policies for the past decade and sought—with little success—to eliminate many commercial activities from and reduce the number of overnight visitors in the Valley. Those actions, most of these authors agree, are necessary to prevent further diminishing of the power of Yosemite.

Battle lines are being drawn again. We include excerpts from the Park Service's recent re-evaluation of the Plan, which proclaims a commitment to the Plan's goals while casting doubt on their efficacy. The Park concessionaire has since weighed in with a proposal to replace Valley tents and cabins with new motel rooms.

The fundamental issue was articulated by Olmsted: how to maximize the number of people who can visit the Park without diminishing the experience they have there. The essays here argue there are other pressing questions, as well: What of Yosemite's role in the larger central Sierra region? How do we manage natural processes that eventually will reshape the visual character of Yosemite? What responsibility do we as individuals have to take care of the Park?

It may be presumptuous to say the future of an ages-old place such as Yosemite lies in our hands today. The greater threat is to the inextricable link between the Park's beauty and the human psyche. Yosemite lived before us and it will outlast us; how we partake of its wonders is a matter of our own choosing.



**... PROSPECTS**

Photo by David Robertson.