

On June 30, 1864, Abraham Lincoln signed legislation that transferred “the ‘cleft’ or ‘gorge’ in the granite peak of the Sierra Nevada Mountains” known as “Yo-Semite valley” [sic] to the State of California for “public use, resort, and recreation.” Yosemite Park Act of 1864, ch. 184, § 1, 13 Stat. 325 (1864). The purpose of the law was to remove the land from the federal public domain in order to protect it from development.