

Yosemite wants to eliminate scalping of Half Dome permits

By Joshua Emerson Smith, Merced Sun-Star

When you think of the final 400-foot ascent of the Yosemite Valley's Half Dome Trail, what words come to mind? "Majestic?" "Breathtaking?" "Crowded?"

How about "expensive"?

Last year, visitors paid as much as \$100 to hike the famous trail.

Over the past two years, to address dangerously overcrowded conditions, park officials have cut in half the daily number of Half Dome hikers by instituting an advance-sales permitting process.

After officials capped Half Dome hikes at 400 people a day, some abused the system by scalping the \$4.50 tickets.

This year, the permitting process will continue with a few changes to curb the resale of tickets.

"To help make the system fair and to limit scalping, we are implementing the lottery system," said Kari Cobb, park spokeswoman. "So everyone puts in at one time, and then in April we send notification to tell people if they were successful."

Starting in March, people will be able to throw their name – and an application for up to six guests – in the digital hat for a nonrefundable fee of \$4.50 online and \$6.50 over the phone. If selected, a \$5 fee is charged for each person in the group. The per-person fee is refundable if the trip is canceled two days in advance.

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