

Jeffrey Pine, Yosemite NP CA.

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The Jeffrey Pine is alleged to be one of the world's most photographed trees. Carleton Watkins first photographed the tree in 1867. It has been subsequently photographed by Ansel Adams (1940), and countless other photographers who have made the pilgrimage to this beloved Yosemite icon. Pictures can be found in books, postcards, posters and throughout the Internet. Sadly, the pine died during the drought of 1976-77, despite the best efforts of park rangers and others who bought buckets of water to it in an attempt to save it.



Unfortunately, sometime around the week of August 18th 2003, the tree fell to the ground. The cause is believed to have been the severe storms in the Sierra Nevada in early August that may have finally weakened it enough to topple over. But the fall is simply part of the natural process of life and death for these pine trees.

While out in San Jose for business meetings in early September. I took the opportunity during the weekend to go shooting in Yosemite. I decided to spend one of my sunset opportunities hiking out to the Jeffrey Pine at the top of Sentinel Dome (8122 foot elevation). This is a moderate 1.5 mile hike, with a modest elevation gain over a well worn path. The sight is quite inspiring as you have a great downward looking view of Half Dome and El Capitan. This location is great for both sunrise and sunset as the lighting on the tree is quite dramatic.

I was a bit early so I got a chance to speak to some of the other hikers. The setting sun did not provide any dramatic light on Half Dome but lit up the Jeffrey Pine real nice coupled with a moonrise behind it. Unfortunately, there were a number of people climbing on the tree and taking pictures. So I was competing for space to take photographs.

For a wonderful panoramic view of Sentinel Dome and Jeffrey Pine (before its fall), go to <http://www.virtualguidebooks.com/CentralCalif/Yosemite/SentinelDome/SouthSideSentinelDome.html>.



All in all it was well worth the hike and will try it again in the future.