



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park  
P. O. Box 577  
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
L7615(YOSE-PM)

### Memorandum

**To:** David Engelstad, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

**From:** Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

**Subject:** NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2013-029 Yosemite Changeable Message Signs Installation (48234)

The Executive Leadership Team has reviewed the proposed project and completed its environmental assessment documentation, and we have determined the following:

- There will not be any effect on threatened, endangered, or rare species and/or their critical habitat.
- There will not be any effect on historic, cultural, or archeological resources.
- There will not be serious or long-term undesirable environmental or visual effects.

The subject proposed project, therefore, is now cleared for all NEPA and NHPA compliance requirements as presented above. Project plans and specifications are approved and construction and/or project implementation can commence.

For the proposed project actions to be within compliance requirements during construction and/or project implementation, the following mitigations must be adhered to:

- Recommend removing "manually changeable" road closure sign near camp 4 location. Information may be redundant or conflicting between signs. Removal of the large sign will improve the area.
- The El Portal site location will impact culturally significant ethnographic resources (including archeological resources). Tribal monitoring of all ground disturbing activities is required based on final site design to mitigate impacts.
- An archeologist will monitor ground-disturbing activity at the El Portal location, identify presence/absence of cultural material, and conduct data recovery if important, buried cultural resources are present.

For complete compliance information see PEPC Project 48234.

//Don Neubacher//

Don L. Neubacher

Enclosure (with attachments)

cc: Statutory Compliance File

*The signed original of this document is on file at the  
Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in  
Yosemite National Park.*

Letter of Compliance Completion - Yosemite Changeable Message Signs Installation - PEPC ID: 48234



## Categorical Exclusion Form

**Project:** Yosemite Changeable Message Signs Installation

**PEPC Project Number:** 48234

**Project Description:**

The goal of this project is to provide the tools necessary for a parkwide traffic management system that will have real-time, information-based, decision-making capabilities. The system will be used to mitigate and potentially reduce traffic congestion, which will ultimately play a role in the quality of visitor experience as visitors navigate the park's transit system.

This project includes the installation of changeable message signs (CMS) at one entrance station location (Big Oak Flat Entrance, Highway 120/East Bound), at one in-park location (Camp 4, Northside Drive/West Bound), and at one out-of-park location (1650 feet west of the Highway 140/El Portal Road Intersection). CMS will be installed on 2 posts and are 3 feet 4 inches in height, 5 feet 10 inches in width, and 8 inches thick. The signs are a full-matrix/LED display, with 85 pixels per square foot. The locations of the signs are critical to be able to reach visitors at approach zones and provide real-time information before they reach decision points. Information provided will consist of:

- (1) Visitor parking information - vehicle counters along with changeable message signs will provide real-time information about the availability of parking at desired locations to inform decisions about riding transit, finding alternative parking, or choosing a different park location.
- (2) Visitor incident information - changeable message signs will provide visitors real-time information about incidents that may impact their travel (i.e. road closures, icy conditions, fire/smoky conditions, adverse weather, congestion delays, construction delays).

To provide in-field, real-time information to the CMS, new vehicle detectors will also be installed at the following locations: Glacier Point parking lot (next to the ranger residence on Glacier Point Road), Badger Pass parking lot (next to entrance road to Badger Pass parking lot), and the west end of Tuolumne Meadows (2.8 miles west of Pothole Dome). Also existing vehicle counters will need to be moved at Tioga Pass, Big Oak Flat Entrance, El Capitan Crossover, Chapel Straight, and South Entrance to provide more accurate vehicle counts. These vehicle counters will either consist of in-pavement installation or overhead installation, dependent of local conditions.

Trenching dimensions will be 12 inches wide by 36 inches deep, with lengths varying according to location (see Environmental Screening Form for specific lengths).

**Project Location:**

Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Madera Counties, CA

**Mitigations:**

- Recommend removing "manually changeable" road closure sign near the Camp 4 location. Information may be redundant or conflicting between signs. Removal of the large sign will improve the area.
- The El Portal site location will impact culturally significant ethnographic resources (including archeological resources). Tribal monitoring of all ground disturbing activities is required based on final site design to mitigate impacts.
- At the El Portal location, an archeologist will monitor ground-disturbing activity, identify the presence/absence of cultural material, and conduct data recovery if important, buried cultural resources are present.

**Describe the category used to exclude action from further NEPA analysis and indicate the number of the category (see Section 3-4 of DO-12):**

C.5 Installation of signs, displays, kiosks, etc.

**On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No exceptional circumstances (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.**

**Superintendent:** //Don Neubacher//                      **Date:** 5/28/14  
Don L. Neubacher

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Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in  
Yosemite National Park.*



# ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

## DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 05/22/2014

Updated May 2007 - per 2004 Departmental Manual revisions and proposed Director's Order 12 changes

### A. PROJECT INFORMATION

**Park Name:** Yosemite National Park  
**Project Title:** 2013-029 Yosemite Changeable Message Signs Installation  
**PEPC Project Number:** 48234  
**Project Type:** Capital Improvement/New Construction (CI)  
**Project Location:**  
**County, State:** Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Madera Counties, California  
**Project Leader:** David Engelstad

Is project a hot topic (controversial or sensitive issues that should be brought to attention of Regional Director)? No

### B. RESOURCE EFFECTS TO CONSIDER:

Identify potential effects to the following physical, natural, or cultural resources	No Effect	Negligible Effects	Minor Effects	Exceeds Minor Effects	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
1. Geologic resources – soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc.		Negligible			Signs at 3 locations: Big Oak Flat will have 420 feet of trenching, Camp 4 will have 150 feet of trenching, and El Portal will have 125 of direction drilling and 15 feet of trenching. Trenches for the signs will be 18 inches wide by 24 inches deep. Sign posts will be buried 1 foot in diameter and 6 feet deep. Vehicle radar poles at 3 locations: Badger Pass will have 300 feet of utility trenching, Glacier Point will have 230 feet of utility trenching, and Chapel Straight will have 220 feet of trenching. Vehicle detectors are 20 foot poles that are buried 2 feet in diameter and 6 feet deep.

<b>Identify potential effects to the following physical, natural, or cultural resources</b>	<b>No Effect</b>	<b>Negligible Effects</b>	<b>Minor Effects</b>	<b>Exceeds Minor Effects</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality	No				
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			There will be construction noises during the installation of the signs, road sensors and vehicle detectors.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics	No				
7. Marine or estuarine resources	No				
8. Floodplains or wetlands	No				
9. Land use, including occupancy, income, values, ownership, type of use	No				
10. Rare or unusual vegetation – old growth timber, riparian, alpine	No				
11. Species of special concern (plant or animal; state or federal listed or proposed for listing) or their habitat	No				
12. Unique ecosystems, biosphere reserves, World Heritage Sites	No				Yosemite National Park is a World Heritage Site.

<b>Identify potential effects to the following physical, natural, or cultural resources</b>	<b>No Effect</b>	<b>Negligible Effects</b>	<b>Minor Effects</b>	<b>Exceeds Minor Effects</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine /Notes</b>
13. Unique or important wildlife or wildlife habitat	No				
14. Unique or important fish or fish habitat	No				
15. Introduce or promote non-native species (plant or animal)	No				
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	No				
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	No				Visitor experience will be enhanced due to up-to-date traffic information.
18. Archeological resources		Negligible			
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes		Negligible			
21. Ethnographic resources		Negligible			
22. Museum collections (objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections)	No				

<b>Identify potential effects to the following physical, natural, or cultural resources</b>	<b>No Effect</b>	<b>Negligible Effects</b>	<b>Minor Effects</b>	<b>Exceeds Minor Effects</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
23. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation, income changes, tax base, infrastructure	No				
24. Minority and low income populations, ethnography, size, migration patterns, etc.	No				
25. Energy resources	No				
26. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies	No				
27. Resource, including energy, conservation potential, sustainability	No				
28. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.	No				
29. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity	No				
30. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?	No				

**C. MANDATORY CRITERIA**

<b>Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comment or Data Needed to Determine</b>
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?		No		
B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?		No		
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?		No		
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		No		
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		No		
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		No		
G. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?		No		
H. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		No		
I. Violate a federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		No		



<b>Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comment or Data Needed to Determine</b>
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?		No		
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007)?		No		
L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?		No		

**For the purpose of interpreting these procedures within the NPS, any action that has the potential to violate the NPS Organic Act by impairing park resources or values would constitute an action that triggers the DOI exception for actions that threaten to violate a federal law for protection of the environment.**

**D. OTHER INFORMATION**

1. Are personnel preparing this form familiar with the site? Yes
  - 1.A. Did personnel conduct a site visit? No
2. Is the project in an approved plan such as a General Management Plan or an Implementation Plan with an accompanying NEPA document? No
3. Are there any interested or affected agencies or parties? No
4. Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? Yes
5. Are there any connected, cumulative, or similar actions as part of the proposed action? (*e.g., other development projects in area or identified in GMP, adequate/available utilities to accomplish project*) No

**E. INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM SIGNATORIES**

<u>Interdisciplinary Team</u>	<u>Field of Expertise</u>
Don L. Neubacher	Superintendent
Michael Gauthier	Chief of Staff
Kathleen Morse	Chief of Planning
Randy Fong	Chief of Project Management
Teri Austin	Chief of Administration Management
Lou Summerfield	Acting Chief of Facilities Management
Linda C. Mazzu	Chief of Resources Management & Science
Kris Kirby	Chief of Business and Revenue Management
Tom Medema	Chief of Interpretation and Education
Kevin Killian	Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection
David Engelstad	Project Leader
Madelyn Ruffner	Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Renea Kennec	NEPA Specialist

**F. SUPERVISORY SIGNATORY**

*Based on the environmental impact information contained in the statutory compliance file and in this environmental screening form, environmental documentation for this stage of the subject project is complete.*

**Recommended:**

Compliance Specialists	Date
<u>//Renea Kennec//</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kennec	<u>5/28/14</u>
<u>//Lisa Acree for//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Madelyn Ruffner	<u>5/28/14</u>
<u>//Randy Fong//</u> Chief, Project Management – Randy Fong	<u>5/28/14</u>

**Approved:**

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Don Neubacher//</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>5/28/14</u>

*The signed original of this document is on file at the Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in Yosemite National Park.*



## PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: May 22, 2014

*(This form should be attached to ESF document sent to the regional director's office for signature. While you may modify this form to fit your needs, you must ensure that the form includes information detailed below and must have your modifications reviewed and approved by the regional environmental coordinator.)*

### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Park Name:** Yosemite National Park  
**Project Title:** 2013-029 Yosemite Changeable Message Signs Installation  
**PEPC Project Number:** 48234  
**Project Type:** Capital Improvement/New Construction (CI)  
**Project Location:**  
**County, State:** Mariposa, California  
**Project Leader:** David Engelstad

### PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
<b>SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST</b>				
Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		No		
Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		No		
Park rare plants or vegetation?		No		
Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		No		
<b>NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST</b>				
Entail ground disturbance?	Yes			Signs at 3 locations: Big Oak Flat will have 420 feet of trenching, Camp 4 will have 150 feet of trenching, and El Portal will have 125 of direction drilling and 15 feet of trenching. Trenches for the signs will be 18 inches wide by 24 inches deep. Sign posts will be buried 1 foot in diameter

<b>ESF Addendum Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
				and 6 feet deep. Vehicle radar poles at 3 locations: Badger Pass will have 300 feet of utility trenching, Glacier Point will have 230 feet of utility trenching, and Chapel Straight will have 220 feet of trenching. Vehicle detectors are 20 foot poles that are buried 2 feet in diameter and 6 feet deep.
Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?	Yes			Yosemite Valley Archeological District; El Portal Archeological District.
Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?	Yes			Signs and vehicle detectors are visually intrusive.
Has a National Register form been completed?		No		
Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		No		
<b>WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST</b>				
Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor?	Yes			Merced River
Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river		No		
Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		No		
Remain consistent with its river segment classification?	Yes			
Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?		No		
Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and Scenic River corridor?		No		

<b>ESF Addendum Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		No		
Consistent with the provisions in the Merced River Plan Settlement Agreement?			N/A	
<b>WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST</b>				
Within designated Wilderness?		No		
Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		No		



# ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES

## A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park

### 2. Project Description:

**Project Name:** 2013-029 Yosemite Changeable Message Signs Installation  
**Prepared by:** Renea Kennec    **Date Prepared:** 05/22/2014    **Telephone:** 209-379-1038  
**PEPC Project Number:** 48234

**Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d])**  
El Portal Archeological District; Yosemite Valley Archeological District; Big Oak Flat Road  
Historic District

### 3. Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify historic properties?

No  
 Yes

**Source or reference:**

### 4. Potentially Affected Resources:

**Archeological resources affected:**  
**Name and number(s):** Yosemite Valley Archeological District  
**NR status:** 1 - Listed in Register and documented

**Name and number(s):** El Portal Archeological District  
**NR status:** 1 - Listed in Register and documented

**Cultural Landscapes Affected:**  
**Name and number(s):** Big Oak Flat Road Historic District

**Ethnographic Resources Affected:**  
**Name and numbers:** Resources of Cultural Significance (un-evaluated)

### 5. The proposed action will: (check as many as apply)

**Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure**  
 **Replace historic features/elements in kind**  
 **Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure**  
 **Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain)**

- Yes **Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric) to a historic setting or cultural landscape**
- No **Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible**
- No **Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible**
- Yes **Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources**
- No **Begin or contribute to deterioration of historic features, terrain, setting, landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources**
- No **Involve a real property transaction (exchange, sale, or lease of land or structures)**
- Other (please specify):** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Supporting Study Data:**

(Attach if feasible; if action is in a plan, EA or EIS, give name and project or page number.)

**B. REVIEWS BY CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS**

The park 106 coordinator requested review by the park's cultural resource specialist/advisors as indicated by check-off boxes or as follows:

Anthropologist

Name: Jennifer Hardin

Date: 05/20/2014

Comments: The El Portal site location will impact culturally significant ethnographic resources (including archeological resources). Tribal monitoring of all ground disturbing activities is required based on final site design to mitigate impacts.

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance*

Assessment of Effect:  No Potential to Cause Effect  No Historic Properties

Affected  No Adverse Effect  Adverse Effect  Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: The El Portal site location will impact culturally significant ethnographic resources (including archeological resources). Tribal monitoring of all ground disturbing activities is required based on final site design to mitigate impacts.

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

Archeologist

Name: Sonny Montague

Date: 04/14/2014

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance*

Assessment of Effect:  No Potential to Cause Effect  No Historic Properties

Affected  No Adverse Effect  Adverse Effect  Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: At the El Portal location, an archeologist will monitor ground-disturbing activity, identify presence/absence of cultural material, and conduct data recovery if important, buried cultural resources are present.

**Doc Method:** Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

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Historical Architect

Name: Paul Stephens

Date: 08/26/2013

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance*

Assessment of Effect:  No Potential to Cause Effect  No Historic Properties

Affected  No Adverse Effect  Adverse Effect  Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

Doc Method: No Potential to Cause Effects [800.3(a)(1)]

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Historical Landscape Architect

Name: Kevin McCardle

Date: 09/05/2013

Comments: Suggest removing "manually changable" road closure sign near camp 4 location. Information may be redundant or conflicting between signs. Removal of large sign will improve area.

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance*

Assessment of Effect:  No Potential to Cause Effect  No Historic Properties

Affected  No Adverse Effect  Adverse Effect  Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

---

**No Reviews From:** Curator, Historian, 106 Advisor, Other Advisor

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## C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Assessment of Effect:

No Potential to Cause Effects  
 No Historic Properties Affected  
 No Adverse Effect  
 Adverse Effect

### 2. Documentation Method:

A. STANDARD 36 CFR PART 800 CONSULTATION

Further consultation under 36 CFR Part 800 is needed.

B. STREAMLINED REVIEW UNDER THE 2008 SERVICEWIDE PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT (PA)



The above action meets all conditions for a streamlined review under section III of the 2008 Servicewide PA for Section 106 compliance.

**APPLICABLE STREAMLINED REVIEW Criteria**  
(Specify 1-16 of the list of streamlined review criteria.)

**C. PLAN-RELATED UNDERTAKING**

Consultation and review of the proposed undertaking were completed in the context of a plan review process, in accordance with the 2008 Servicewide PA and 36 CFR Part 800.  
Specify plan/EA/EIS:

**D. UNDERTAKING RELATED TO ANOTHER AGREEMENT**

The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under another document such as a statewide agreement established in accord with 36 CFR 800.7 or counterpart regulations.

Explanation: None

1999 Programmatic Agreement

**E. COMBINED NEPA/NHPA Document**

Documentation is required for the preparation of an EA/FONSI or an EIS/ROD has been developed and used so as also to meet the requirements of 36 CFR 800.3 through 800.6

**G. Memo to SHPO/THPO**

**H. Memo to ACHP**

**3. Additional Consulting Parties Information:**

Additional Consulting Parties: No

**4. Stipulations and Conditions:**

Following are listed any stipulations or conditions necessary to ensure that the assessment of effect above is consistent with 36 CFR Part 800 criteria of effect or to avoid or reduce potential adverse effects.

**5. Mitigations/Treatment Measures:**

**Measures to prevent or minimize loss or impairment of historic/prehistoric properties:**  
(Remember that setting, location, and use may be relevant.)

- Assessment of Effect - Recommend removing "manually changable" road closure sign near camp 4 location. Information may be redundant or conflicting between signs. Removal of large sign will improve area.
- Assessment of Effect - At the El Portal location, an archeologist will monitor ground-disturbing activity, identify presence/absence of cultural material, and conduct data recovery if important, buried cultural resources are present.

- Assessment of Effect - The El Portal site location will impact culturally significant ethnographic resources (including archeological resources). Tribal monitoring of all ground disturbing activities is required based on final site design to mitigate impacts.

**D. RECOMMENDED BY PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR:**

**Historic Preservation Officer:**

Kimball Koch //Kimball Koch// **Date:** 5/28/14

**E. SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL**

**The proposed work conforms to the NPS *Management Policies* and *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, and I have reviewed and approve the recommendations, stipulations, or conditions noted in Section C of this form.**

**Superintendent:** //Don Neubacher// **Date:** 5/28/14  
Don L. Neubacher

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# ELT Approved Changeable Message Signs (CSMs) Locations (3 locations)

