



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
L7615(YOSE-PM)

## United States Department of the Interior

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

#### Memorandum

**To:** Dave R. Kari, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

**From:** Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

**Subject:** NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2010-040 Valley Loop Trail (from Lower Yosemite Falls to Church Bowl) Rehabilitation (30975)

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

- Will not be any effect on threatened, endangered, or rare species and/or their critical habitat.
- Will not be any effect on historical, cultural, or archeological resources.
- 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 can commence.

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

- No mitigations identified.

For complete compliance information see PEPC Project 30975.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

//Don L. 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.*



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## Categorical Exclusion Form

**Project:** 2010-040 Valley Loop Trail (from Lower Yosemite Falls to Church Bowl) Rehabilitation

**PEPC Project Number:** 30975

**Project Description:**

The project will rehabilitate part of the Valley Loop Trail in Yosemite Valley. The section of trail begins at Lower Yosemite Falls, ends at Church Bowl, and encompasses 4,325 linear feet; it is not in the Merced River Corridor. The trail was built in 1929 as a paved bridle path, six feet wide, which circled Yosemite Valley. After its initial completion, trail crews have continued to maintain the trail, doing repair work and repaving as necessary. Currently this section of trail is in need of rehabilitation. The original pavement has potholes, cracks, and has completely eroded in some spots. The finished project will complete 4,325 linear feet of trail that is six feet wide and totals 25,950 square feet of trail. The finished result of this project will create a more sustainable trail that will require minimal maintenance by the trails division, will protect natural resources, and will offer improved hiking tread and ease for park visitors.

The project will restore this section of trail by:

- Remove all existing asphalt and transport out of the park the removed material to a recycling plant.
- Add six inches of compacted base material, and placing two inches of decomposed granite with Sta-Lok Stabilizer, a nontoxic, nonstaining organic soil stabilizer as tread.
- Use existing rock and native soil will be used to contain the materials.

Work will be performed by contract with park personnel supervision during spring and summer of 2011.

**Project Locations:** .

Mariposa, CA

**Mitigation(s):**

- No mitigations identified.

**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.4 Routine maintenance and repairs to cultural resource sites, structures, utilities and grounds under an approved Historic Structures Preservation Guide or Cyclic Maintenance Guide; or if the action would not adversely affect the cultural resource.

**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 L. Neubacher//

**Date**  2/4/11

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## ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

### DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 01/31/2011

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:** 2010-40 Valley Loop Trail (from Lower Yosemite Falls to Church Bowl)  
 Rehabilitation  
**PEPC Project Number:** 30975  
**Project Type:** Facility Rehabilitation (FR)  
**Project Location:** Mariposa, California  
**Project Leader:** Dave Kari

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			The project includes 4,325 linear feet and six feet wide trail.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality		Negligible			There will be minor, temporary air emissions during the trail restoration.
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			Equipment noises will occur throughout the short duration of this project.
5. Water quality or quantity	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>
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.
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)		Negligible			All base material is free of noxious weeds; it is inspected prior to entering the park.

<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>
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	No				
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources		Negligible			Trail closures will be in effect during the trail rehabilitation. Visitor experience will be enhanced with the new trail tread.
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes		Negligible			Yosemite Valley Historic District.
21. Ethnographic resources	No				
22. Museum collections (objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections)	No				
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				

<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>
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				Trail maintenance will be minimized with the addition of the new trail tread.
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		

<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>
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		
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		



Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
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
2. Did personnel conduct a site visit? No
3. Is the project in an approved plan such as a General Management Plan or an Implementation Plan with an accompanying NEPA document? No
4. Are there any interested or affected agencies or parties? No
5. Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? No
6. 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 Kathleen Morse Randy Fong Katariina Tuovinen Ed Walls Joe Meyer Marty Nielson Tom Medema Charles Cuvelier Dave R. Kari Elexis Mayer Elexis Mayer Renea Kennec	Superintendent Chief of Planning Acting Chief of Project Management Chief of Administration Management Chief of Facilities Management Acting Chief of Resources Management & Science Chief of Business and Revenue Management Chief of Interpretation and Education Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection Project Leader Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager Acting Historic Preservation Officer 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>1/31/11</u>
<u>//Sue Clark//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Elexis Mayer	<u>1/31/11</u>
<u>//Randy Fong//</u> Chief, Project Management – Randy Fong	<u>2/3/11</u>

**Approved:**

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Don L. Neubacher//</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>2/4/11</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: January 31, 2011

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Park Name:** Yosemite National Park  
**Project Title:** 2011-040 Valley Loop Trail (from Lower Yosemite Falls to Church Bowl)  
 Rehabilitation  
**PEPC Project Number:** 30975  
**Project Type:** Facility Rehabilitation (FR)  
**Project Location:** Mariposa, California

**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			
Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?	Yes			Yosemite Valley Archeological District; the park archeologist has determined that there are "No Historic Properties Affected."
Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?		No		
Has a National Register form been completed?		No		
Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the		No		

area of potential effect?				
<b>WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST</b>				
Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor? (Name the river corridor)		No		
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?		No		
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		
Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values		No		
Consistent with the provisions in the Merced River Plan Settlement Agreement?	Yes			
<b>WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST</b>				
Within designated Wilderness?		No		
Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		No		

Example of uneven edge and asphalt erosion





Example of tripping hazard created by a sink hole due to water runoff—which would be prevented by an asphalt trail surface



Tape measure set at "six feet" showing the width of the original trail and the proposed rehabilitation





Current photo taken from the same perspective as the 1931 SI Report Photo 5119







## ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

### A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park    **Park district (optional):**

2. **Project Description:**

**Project Name:** 2010-040 Valley Loop Trail (from Lower Yosemite Falls to Church Bowl)  
Rehabilitation

**Date:** January 31, 2011

**PEPC Project ID Number:** 30975

3. **Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify cultural resources?**

No

Yes

Source or reference: Yosemite Valley Historic District; Yosemite Valley Archeological District.

Check here if no known cultural resources will be affected. (If this is because area has been disturbed, please explain or attach additional information to show the disturbance was so

extensive as to preclude intact cultural deposits.)

4. **Potentially Affected Resource:**

- None

5. **The proposed action will:**

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)

Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric) to a historic setting or cultural landscape

Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible

Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible

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:**

**Prepared by:** Renea Kennec    **Date Prepared:**    **Telephone:** 209-379-1038

**B. REVIEWS BY CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS**

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

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[ X ] Archeologist  
Name: Laura Kirn  
Date: 05/07/2010

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance* [ ]  
Assessment of Effect: X 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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[ X ] Historical Architect  
Name: Sueann Brown  
Date: 05/14/2010

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance* [ ]  
Assessment of Effect: \_\_\_ No Historic Properties Affected    X No Adverse Effect    \_\_\_ Adverse Effect  
\_\_\_ Streamlined Review  
Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

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[ X ] Historical Landscape Architect  
Name: David Humphrey  
Date: 05/13/2010

*Check if project does not involve ground disturbance* [ ]  
Assessment of Effect: X 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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No Reviews From: Curator, Historian, 106 Advisor, Other Advisor, Anthropologist

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

### 1. Assessment of Effect:

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.  
Specify:

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

F. No Potential to Cause Effects [800.3(a)(1)]

G. Memo to SHPO/THPO

H. Memo to ACHP

### 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.)

No Assessment of Effect mitigations identified.

**D. 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.

**Signature of Acting Historic Preservation Officer**  //Sue Clark//

**Date:**  2/1/11

**Signature of Superintendent**  //Don L. Neubacher//

**Date:**  2/5/11

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