



# 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:** Sean McCabe, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

**From:** Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

**Subject:** NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2014-006 Yosemite AT&T Microwave Radio Upgrade (51061)

The Executive Leadership Team has reviewed the proposed project/action 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:

- Ensure there is an Accident Prevention Plan and a site specific lift plan for each tower installation submitted to the park Safety Manager.
- Tribes have requested additional detailed information about the measures that will be employed to avoid impacts to culturally significant resources and requested a tribal monitor be present during all ground disturbing activities.
- All construction equipment, including geotechnical boring equipment, shall be pressure-washed prior to entering the park and shall be clean of any soil, plant matter, or other materials. Park natural resource specialist shall inspect the vehicles prior to entry into the park.

### Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

None

For complete compliance information see PEPC Project 51061.

//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.*



## Categorical Exclusion Form

**Project:** 2014-006 Yosemite AT&T Microwave Radio Upgrade

**PEPC Project Number:** 51061

**Project Description:**

AT&T proposes to increase the bandwidth capacity of its existing microwave radio service. This microwave system provides phone and internet service to Yosemite National Park, the Hetch Hetchy Water and Power O'Shaughnessy Dam complex, and the communities of El Portal, Foresta, Wawona and Yosemite West. Yosemite National Park and its residential communities are currently experiencing capacity issues with the existing service, limiting the internet bandwidth available to the park, its concession operations and residents.

AT&T proposes to replace their existing radios and microwave dishes at their El Portal, Wawona and Yosemite Village central offices and their Henness Ridge, Sentinel Dome and Turtleback Dome communication sites. They also propose at their Henness Ridge communication site to replace their existing 30 foot monopole with a 125 foot steel lattice tower.

The new, taller tower at the Henness Ridge communication site will allow AT&T to send microwave signals directly to Fremont Peak outside of Mariposa. Additionally, the existing microwave connection rearrangement will better distribute the upgraded capacity brought to the park and the surrounding communities.

Design of the foundation for the proposed Henness Ridge tower AT&T will require geotechnical investigations consisting of three subsurface borings to determine the soil conditions at the site. These investigations will inform the design of the tower's foundation. A triangular tower with 17' between the three legs is proposed, each leg base will be 6 feet square. The disturbed area excavated to build a foundation for such a tower is estimated to be 20 to 25 feet on a side, creating a possible disturbed and excavated area of 400 to 625 square feet. An additional excavation will need to occur to bury a grounding loop just beyond the foundation. Its size is unknown at this time, but it is expected to not be much more than the size of the excavation for the tower foundation. Trenching to connect to the building is estimated to be 5 feet long, 2 feet wide and 3 feet deep.

AT&T will create a GIS view shed analysis to aid in identifying which areas the proposed tower could be viewed. AT&T will also develop photo simulations of the proposed tower. Finally, AT&T will conduct a balloon test, tethering a 10 foot balloon to a crane at the 125 foot height to simulate the location of the proposed tower. AT&T and park staff will then visit sites that the GIS analysis identifies as possible viewing points of the tower and will evaluate its potential scenic impact. At the existing Sentinel Dome communications site AT&T will need to remove 5 White fir (*Abies concolor*) trees to maintain the existing and proposed microwave radio transmission paths to the existing Turtleback Dome communications site.

**Project Locations:**

Mariposa County, CA

**Mitigations:**

- Ensure there is an Accident Prevention Plan and a site specific lift plan for each tower installation submitted to the park Safety Manager.
- Tribes have requested additional detailed information about the measures that will be employed to avoid impacts to culturally significant resources and requested a tribal monitor be present during all ground disturbing activities.
- All construction equipment, including geotechnical boring equipment, shall be pressure-washed prior to entering the park and shall be clean of any soil, plant matter, or other materials. Park natural resource specialist shall inspect the vehicles prior to entry into the park.

**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.12 Upgrading or adding new overhead utility facilities to existing poles, or replacement poles which do not change existing pole line configurations.

**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:** 7/22/14

Don L. Neubacher

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Yosemite National Park.*



# ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

## DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 07/17/2014

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:** 2014-006 Yosemite AT&T Microwave Radio Upgrade  
**PEPC Project Number:** 51061  
**Project Type:** Right-of-Way Permit (ROW)  
**Project Location:**  
**County, State:** Mariposa, California  
**Project Leader:** Sean McCabe

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			Tower bases will consist of a six foot square that is 4 feet deep. Trenching includes five foot long, two feet wide and three feet deep.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality		Negligible			Installation of the tower will potentially create temporary dust.
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			Temporary construction and equipment noises are associated with this project.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics	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>
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)	No				Equipment will be inspected prior to entering the park including the geotechnical boring equipment.
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	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>
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources		Negligible			Phone and internet service will be improved with this microwave radio upgrade; some visitors will see this as an improved experience.
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes	No				
21. Ethnographic resources		Negligible			Tribal review began March 4, 2014. Tribes have requested additional detailed information about the measures that will be employed to avoid impacts to culturally significant resources and requested a tribal monitor be present during all ground disturbing activities.
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				
26. Other agency or tribal land use plans	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>
or policies					
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		



<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		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>
adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007)?				
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		

**D. OTHER INFORMATION**

1. Are personnel preparing this form familiar with the site? No
- 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><b>Interdisciplinary Team</b></u>	<u><b>Field of Expertise</b></u>
Don L. Neubacher	Superintendent
Michael Gauthier	Chief of Staff
Kathleen Morse	Chief of Planning
Randy Fong	Chief of Project Management
Zach Allely	Acting Chief of Administration Management
Paul Laymon	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
Sean McCabe	Project Leader
Lisa Acree	Acting Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Renea Kenec	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 Kenec//</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kenec	<u>7/17/14</u>
<u>//Lisa Acree//</u> Acting Compliance Program Manager – Lisa Acree	<u>7/17/14</u>
<u>//Randy Fong//</u> Chief, Project Management – Randy Fong	<u>7/17/14</u>

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Don Neubacher//</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>7/22/14</u>

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## PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: July 17, 2014

### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Park Name:** Yosemite National Park  
**Project Title:** 2014-006 Yosemite AT&T Microwave Radio Upgrade  
**PEPC Project Number:** 51061  
**Project Type:** Right-of-Way Permit (ROW)  
**Project Location:**  
**County, State:** Mariposa, California  
**Project Leader:** Sean McCabe

### 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			Tower bases will consist of a six foot square that is 4 feet deep. Trenching includes five foot long, two feet wide and three feet deep.
Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?	Yes			
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 area of potential effect?		No		
<b>WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST</b>				
Fall within a wild and scenic 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?		N/A	
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	
<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:** 2014-006 Yosemite AT&T Microwave Radio Upgrade

**Prepared by:** Renea Kennec

**Date Prepared:** 07/17/2014

**Telephone:** 209-379-1038

**PEPC Project Number:** 51061

**Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d])**

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

No

Yes

**Source or reference:** There are no archeological sites in the project area. The project area is in a culturally significant site to a tribe with important ethnographic resources linked to the area.

### 4. **Potentially Affected Resources:**

**Ethnographic Resources Affected:**

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

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

No Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure

No Replace historic features/elements in kind

No Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure

No Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment  
(inc. terrain)

No Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric)  
to a historic setting or cultural landscape

Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible

No Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible

Yes Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources  
Begin or contribute to deterioration of historic features, terrain, setting,  
No landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources  
Involve a real property transaction (exchange, sale, or lease of land or  
No 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:**

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Anthropologist

Name: Jennifer Hardin

Date: 04/01/2014

Comments: Tribal review began March 4 , 2014. No comments received as of April 1, 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:

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

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Archeologist

Name: Sonny Montague

Date: 06/04/2014

*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:

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

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Historical Landscape Architect

Name: Kevin McCardle

Date: 07/14/2014

*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: Recommend tower should be painted matte white to further minimize visual impact.

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

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**No Reviews From:** Curator, Historical Architect, 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.

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 - Ethnography - Tribes have requested additional detailed information about the measures that will be employed to avoid impacts to culturally significant resources and requested a tribal monitor be present during all ground disturbing activities.**

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

**Historic Preservation Officer:**

Kimball  
Koch

//Kimball Koch//

**Date:** 7/17/2014

**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:** 7/22/14

Don L. Neubacher

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Yosemite National Park.*