



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: Sue Beatty, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2015-008 El Portal Willow and Native Plant Community Restoration (57077)

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 be no adverse effect on historical, 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:

- No mitigations identified.

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

None

For complete compliance information see PEPC Project 57077.

//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.*



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2015-008 El Portal Willow and Native Plant Community Restoration

PEPC Project Number: 57077

Project Description:

This project will enhance conditions in the seasonal wetland in the El Portal Administrative site. While generally described in the Merced River Plan (MRP), this Merced River cut-off channel was not mapped as restoration in the MRP (see MRP Final EIS, page 8-209).

This project will include the following actions:

- 1) Native willows and traditionally used plants will be planted at the site to restore wetland habitat.
- 2) Mature willows will also be harvested for restoration projects in Yosemite Valley that require willow cuttings for bank stabilization and erosion control. Intentionally producing additional material to meet the future demands of these projects will ensure their success and protect local willow populations from over harvesting.

This site has roads on three sides and housing units on the fourth side. The wetlands are likely connected to the Merced River through subsurface water. In 2011, a dense stand of Himalayan blackberry was treated with herbicide. Dense mats of dead canes still stand in most areas and will be removed prior to willow planting.

Project Locations:

Mariposa County, CA

Mitigations:

- 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):

E.2 Restoration of noncontroversial native species into suitable habitats within their historic range and elimination of exotic species.

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: 6/2/15

Don L. Neubacher

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 04/28/2015

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: 2015-008 El Portal Willow and Native Plant Community Restoration
PEPC Project Number: 57077
Project Type: Restoration (REST)
Project Location:
County, State: Mariposa, California
Project Leader: Sue Beatty

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 willow will be planted at a depth of 1-2 feet deep. There will be a 6 inch layer of mulch added to the site.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality	No				
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			This two week project involves using a hydro-drill during the day from 8-5pm.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics		Negligible			The newly planted willows will trap water and sediment and improve infiltration of surface runoff.

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
7. Marine or estuarine resources	No				
8. Floodplains or wetlands		Negligible			The proposed project area is a natural wetland. The native willows are a desired control measure.
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				
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	No				

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
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	No				
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes	No				
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				
26. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies	No				
27. Resource, including energy, conservation potential, sustainability	No				

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
28. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.	No				
29. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity		Negligible			This project re-establishes native species to the area and provides the park's long-term management goals.
30. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?	No				

C. MANDATORY CRITERIA

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
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		No		

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?				
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		
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,		No		

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?				

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? Yes
- 3.A. Did you make a diligent effort to contact them? Yes
4. Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? Yes, February Tribal Spreadsheet; no comments were received.
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
Kathleen Morse	Chief of Planning
Randy Fong	Chief of Project Management
Jeff Hilliard	Chief of Administration Management
Ron Borne	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
Sue Beatty	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>5/18/15</u>
<u>//Madelyn Ruffner//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Madelyn Ruffner	<u>5/29/15</u>
<u>//Randy Fong//</u> Chief, Project Management – Randy Fong	<u>5/29/15</u>

Approved:

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Don L. Neubacher//</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>6/1/15</u>

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PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: May 11, 2015

PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: Yosemite National Park
Project Title: 2015-008 El Portal Willow and Native Plant Community Restoration
PEPC Project Number: 57077
Project Type: Restoration (REST)
Project Location:
County, State: Mariposa, California
Project Leader: Sue Beatty

PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST				
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		
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
Entail ground disturbance?	Yes			The willow will be planted at a depth of 1-2 feet deep. There will be a 6 inch layer of mulch added to the site.
Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?		No		
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		
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				
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		No		

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
river?				
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		
Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		No		
WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST				
Within designated Wilderness?		No		
Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		No		



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 04/28/2015

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park

2. **Project Description:**

Project Name: 2005-004 El Portal Willow and Native Plant Community Restoration
Prepared by: Renea Kennec **Date Prepared:** 04/28/2015 **Telephone:** 209-379-1038
PEPC Project Number: 57077

Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d])
El Portal Resources of Cultural Significance

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

 No

 X Yes

Source or reference:

4. **Potentially Affected Resources:**

Ethnographic Resources Affected:

Name and numbers: El Portal 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

 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:

[X] Anthropologist

Name: Mike Turek

Date: 05/14/2015

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:

[X] Archeologist

Name: Sonny Montague

Date: 04/23/2015

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

[X] Historical Architect

Name: Charles Tonetti

Date: 05/01/2015

Comments: No historic structures are impacted by the proposed work.

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:

[X] Historical Landscape Architect

Name: Kevin McCardle

Date: 04/23/2015

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

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 as amended in 2014.

☐ 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

SHPO/THPO Notes:

3. Additional Consulting Parties Information:

N/A

4. Stipulations and Conditions:

N/A

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. RECOMMENDED BY PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR:

Historic Preservation Officer:

Kimball
Koch

//Kimball Koch//

Date: 5/19/15

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

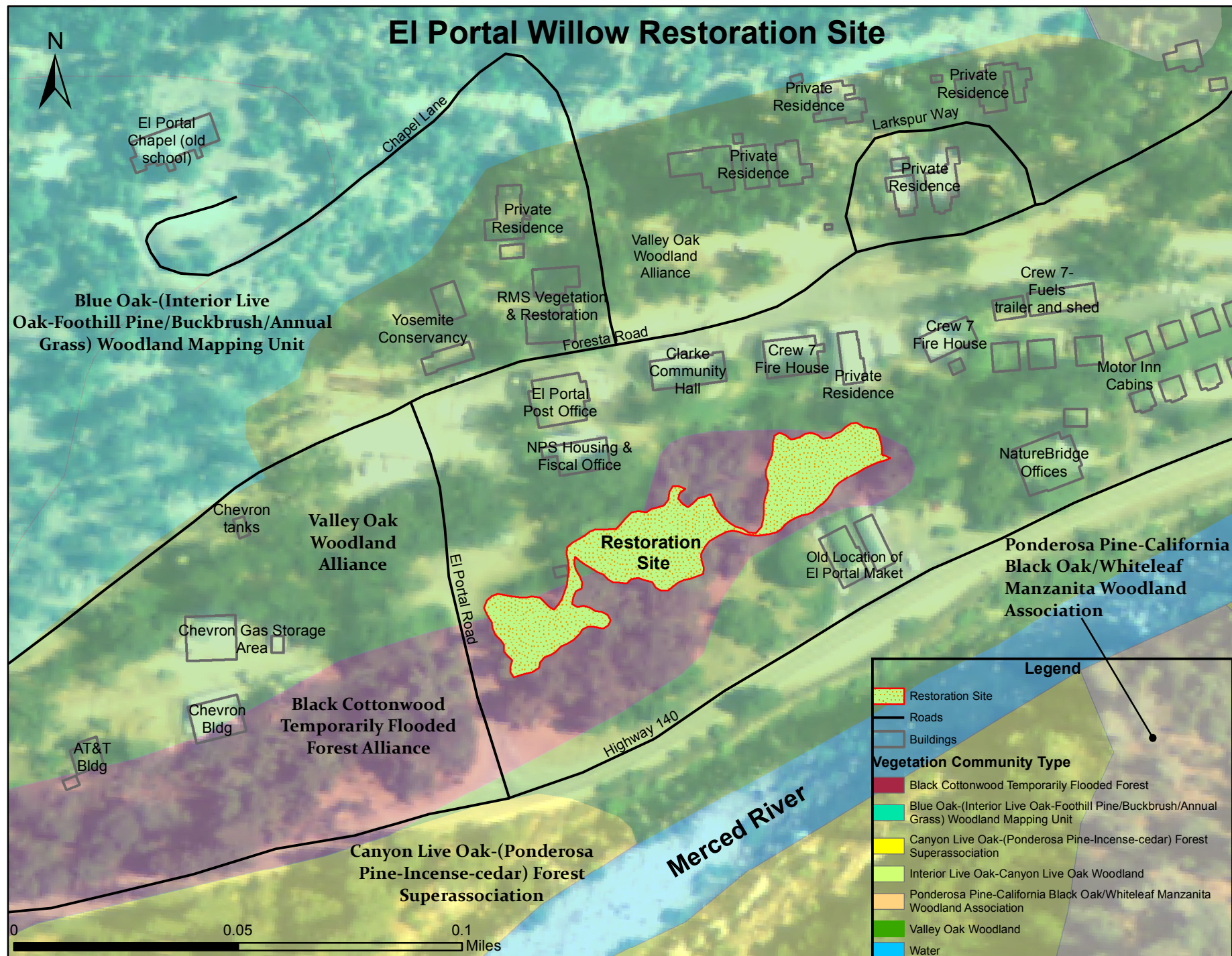
The proposed work conforms to the NPS *Management Policies* and *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, and I have reviewed and approve the recommendations, stipulations, or conditions noted in Section C of this form.

Superintendent: //Don L. Neubacher//

Date: 6/1/15

Don L. Neubacher

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El Portal Willow Restoration Site Photos



Figure 1. View of Site from El Portal Road



Figure 2. Close-up of Dead Blackberry Canes, Sprayed 4 Years Prior



Figure 3. Open Area Dominated by Cocklebur (Non-native)



Figure 4. 12' Tall Pokeweed in Foreground, 6' Tall Mullein in Background, Both Non-native Growing Through Dead Blackberry Canes



Figure 5. Lone Mullein Emerging Amongst Dead Blackberry Canes Early in the Spring