



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
L7617 (YOSE)

## Memorandum

To: Steve Thompson

From: Superintendent

Subject: 2006-001 Ahwahnee Hotel Pond Cleanup (13727)

Your proposed project is an action that has been determined to result in no measurable environmental effects. It is therefore categorically excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act analysis under Categorical Exclusion: DO12 3.4 C (4) – *Routine maintenance and repairs to cultural resource sites, structures, utilities, and grounds if the action falls under an approved Historic Structures Preservation Guide or Cyclic Maintenance Guide or if the action would not adversely affect the cultural resource.*

Necessary compliance coordination has been completed regarding the National Historic Preservation Act, the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the Endangered Species Act, as applicable. This project clearance is valid providing that you adhere to the conditions stipulated under “Project Mitigations and Conditions,” below, and in the attached *Environmental Screening Form*, *Cultural Resource Effects Assessment Form* (XXX; when attached), and *Wilderness Minimum Requirement Analysis* (when attached) when implementing this project.

### Project Mitigations and Conditions:

1. Submit an Accident Safety Plan to the park Safety Office (209-379-1079) for review and approval before proceeding with this work. (Safety Office)
2. Test soils removed from pond if it is to be used or disposed of in the park; coordinate with Resources Management & Sciences Division (Carol Knipper, 379-3262). (Resources Management and Sciences)
3. Ensure that any equipment or materials brought into the park is free of non-native invasive and noxious weeds. All staff working on site shall be informed of and follow best management practices for preventing the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive plant species as described in Division 1 specifications, Section 1355. (Environmental Planning & Compliance Office)
4. Project proponent must consider and prepare for the possibility that the concrete pond structure has deteriorated. (Project Management)

*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 or conditions in DO12 3.5 or 3.6 apply and the action is fully described in DO12, Section 3.4.*

R. Kevin Cann, Acting //Signed Copy on File//

11/9/05

Michael J. Tollefson

Date

Original: Statutory Compliance File

cc: Project Proponent

Enclosure (1)

**A. PROJECT INFORMATION**

Park Name: Yosemite NP

Project Number: 13727

Project Type: Resource Management Plan/Site Plan (RMP)

Project Location: County, State: Mariposa, California      District, Section: Yosemite Valley, Ahwahnee

Project Originator/Coordinator: Steve Thompson

**Project Title: 2006-001 Ahwahnee Hotel Pond Cleanout (13727)**

**B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND**

This project involves draining the Ahwahnee Pond and removing all aquatic vegetation and accumulated mud and debris, using hand labor. Materials removed from the pond would be removed from the park and taken to the county landfill. In concert with this action, NPS Wildlife Management would remove all bullfrogs and their tadpoles that remain from this summer's eradication efforts. Animals thus collected would be killed humanely through chemical euthanasia.

<b>Project Background Information</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Explanation/Notes</b>
1. Did NPS staff conduct a site visit? If no, explain.		X		
2a. Is the project in an approved plan? (Identify the plan and provide a section or page citation.)		X		
2b. Is the project consistent with that plan?			X	
2c. Is the Plan's CE, FONSI, or ROD current?			X	
3a. Are there any interested or affected parties?		X		
3b. Has a diligent effort been made to communicate with them?				
4a. Are there any affected agencies or tribes?		X		
4b. Has consultation been completed?				

<b>Attached Project Information (becomes part of CE)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Explanation/Notes</b>
1. Maps: 2 required (vicinity map & site map)				None provided
2. Drawings (e.g., design, construction)	X			Historic drawing of pond
3. Site Plans				
4. Photographs	X			Recent view of pond
5. Non-NEPA/NHPA Approvals (Explain)				
6. Other (Explain)				

**C. ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL RESOURCE EFFECTS**

<b>Are any impacts possible on the following resources?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
1. Geologic resources: soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc		X		
2. From geohazards		X		
3. Air quality		X		
4. Soundscapes	X			Negligible: temporary construction noise during project work.
5. Water quality or quantity		X		
6. Stream flow characteristics		X		
7. Marine or estuarine resources			X	
8. Floodplains or wetlands		X		
9. Land use, including occupancy, income, values, ownership, type of use		X		
10. Rare or unusual vegetation – old growth timber, riparian, alpine		X		
11. Species of special concern (plant or animal; state or federal listed or proposed for listing) or their habitat		X		
12. Unique ecosystems, biosphere reserves, World Heritage Sites	X			Yosemite is a World Heritage Site. Assessment of effect is "no effect," see attached XXX.
13. Unique or important wildlife or wildlife habitat		X		
14. Unique or important fish or fish habitat		X		
15. Introduce or promote non-native species (plant or animal)		X		
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.		X		
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	X			Enhancement of visitor experience.
18. Cultural resources including cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources		X		
19. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation, income changes, tax base, infrastructure		X		
20. Minority and low income populations, ethnography, size, migration patterns, etc.		X		
21. Energy resources		X		
22. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies		X		
23. Resource, including energy, conservation potential		X		
24. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.		X		
25. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity		X		
26. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?		X		
<b>Comments, Mitigations and Conditions:</b>				
1.				

**D. MANDATORY CRITERIA**

<b>If implemented, would the proposed action:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
A. Have material adverse effects on public health or safety?	X			Mitigated; Accident Safety Plan will be submitted, approved and followed.
B. Have adverse effects on such unique 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; floodplains; or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the National Register of Natural Landmarks?		X		
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects?		X		
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		X		
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		X		
F. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		X		
G. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?		X		
H. Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		X		
I. Require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?		X		
J. Threaten to violate a federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		X		
K. Involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA sec. 102(2)(E))?		X		
L. Have a disproportionate, significant adverse effect on low-income or minority populations (EO 12898)?		X		
M. Restrict access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?		X		
N. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of federally listed noxious weeds (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act)?	X			Mitigated; see condition 2 below.
O. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of non-native invasive species or actions that may promote the introduction, growth or expansion of the range of non-native invasive species (EO 13112)?	X			Mitigated; see condition 2 below.

**D. MANDATORY CRITERIA**

<b>If implemented, would the proposed action:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
P. Require a permit from a federal, state, or local agency to proceed, unless the agency from which the permit is required agrees that a CE is appropriate?		X		
Q. Have the potential for significant impact as indicated by a federal, state, or local agency or Indian tribe?		X		
R. Have the potential to be controversial because of disagreement over possible environmental effects?		X		
S. Have the potential to violate the NPS Organic Act by impairing park resources or values?		X		
<p><b>Comments, Mitigations and Conditions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Project proponent must submit an Accident Safety Plan to the park Safety Office (209-379-1079) for review and approval before proceeding with this work. (Safety Office)</b></li> <li><b>2. Project proponent must ensure that equipment brought in is free of non-native invasive and noxious weeds. All staff working on site shall be informed of and follow best management practices for preventing the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive plant species as described in Division 1 specifications, Section 1355. (Environmental Planning &amp; Compliance Office)</b></li> </ol>				

**E. SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST**

<b>Within the area of potential effect, are there:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
1. Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		X		
2. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		X		
3. Park rare plants or vegetation?		X		
4. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		X		
If "yes" to any of the above questions, a Special-Status Species Checklist must be completed and attached.				
<b>Comments, Mitigations and Conditions:</b>				
1.				

**F. NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST**

<b>Within the area of potential effect:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
1. Will there be ground disturbance?		X		
2. Are there any archeological sites?		X		
3. Are there any traditional cultural resources?		X		
4. Is the project within the boundary of an archeological or historic district?		X		
5a. Is there a National Historic Landmark?	X			Ahwahnee Hotel is a National Historic Landmark. Assessment of effect is "no effect," see attached XXX.
5b. Is there a structure(s) on the park's <i>List of Classified Structures</i> ?	X			Ahwahnee Hotel is on the List of Classified Structures. Assessment of effect is "no effect," see attached XXX.
5c. Is there a historic property with a DOE and concurrence by the SHPO or a completed National Register form?		X		
5d. Is there a cultural property requiring review under NHPA, Section 110?		X		
6. Would there be alteration of a structure or cultural landscape covered by 5a-d, above?		X		
If "yes" to any of the above, then an Assessment of Effects form (YOSE-XXX) must be completed and attached.				
<b>Mitigations and Conditions:</b>				
1.				

**G. WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST**

<b>Is the proposed project:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
1. Within designated Wilderness?		X		
2. Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		X		
If "yes" to either of the above, then a Wilderness Minimum Requirements Analysis must be completed and attached.				
<b>Mitigations and Conditions:</b>				
1.				

**H. WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST**

<b>Does the proposed project:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Data Needed to Determine/Notes</b>
1. Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor? If "yes", name the river(s)	X			Merced River
2. Fall within the bed and banks AND affect the free-flow of the river?		X		Merced Wild and Scenic River.
3. Potentially affect water quality of the area?		X		
4. Remain consistent with its river segment classification?	X			Ahwahnee Hotel pond cleanout is consistent with this section's classification of "Recreational."
5. Protect and enhance river ORVs?	X			Ahwahnee Hotel pond cleanout will protect and enhance ORVs.
6a. Fall within the River Protection Overlay?		X		
6b. If "yes", is it consistent with conditions of the River Protection Overlay?		X		
8. Remain consistent with the areas Management Zoning?	X			Ahwahnee Hotel Pond Cleanout is consistent with this areas Management Zoning of "3B-Visitor Base and Lodging."
9a. Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?		X		
9b. If 9a is "yes", will the project affect the Wild and Scenic River corridor?			X	
9c. If 9a is "yes", will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?			X	
If "yes" to questions 2, 9b, or 9c, then a WSRA Section 7 determination must be completed and attached.				
<b>Mitigations and Conditions:</b>				
1.				



**I. NEPA Analysis and Approval Conditions**

When implemented as detailed in the project description and following all Project Mitigations and Conditions listed below, this project meets the terms and conditions of a categorical exclusion to NEPA.

**Applicable Categorical Exclusion:**

DO12 3.4 C (4) – Routine maintenance and repairs to cultural resource sites, structures, utilities, and grounds if the action falls under an approved Historic Structures Preservation Guide or Cyclic Maintenance Guide or if the action would not adversely affect the cultural resource.

**Project Mitigations and Conditions:**

- 1. Submit an Accident Safety Plan to the park Safety Office (209-379-1079) for review and approval before proceeding with this work. (Safety Office)**
- 2. Test soils removed from pond if it is to be used or disposed of in the park; coordinate with Resources Management & Sciences Division (Carol Knipper, 379-3262). (Resources Management and Sciences)**
- 3. Ensure that any equipment or materials brought into the park is free of non-native invasive and noxious weeds. All staff working on site shall be informed of and follow best management practices for preventing the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive plant species as described in Division 1 specifications, Section 1355. (Environmental Planning & Compliance Office)**
- 4. Project proponent must consider and prepare for the possibility that the concrete pond structure has deteriorated. (Project Management)**

*This project has been reviewed in accordance with the above criteria and it has been determined that the project will result in no or minimal environmental effects. Therefore, it is categorically excluded from further environmental review required under the National Environmental Policy Act. Additionally, the necessary compliance coordination has been completed with regard to the National Historic Preservation Act, the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the Endangered Species Act.*

**Date**

GWColliver //Signed Copy on File// 10/31/05  
**Compliance Specialist Date**

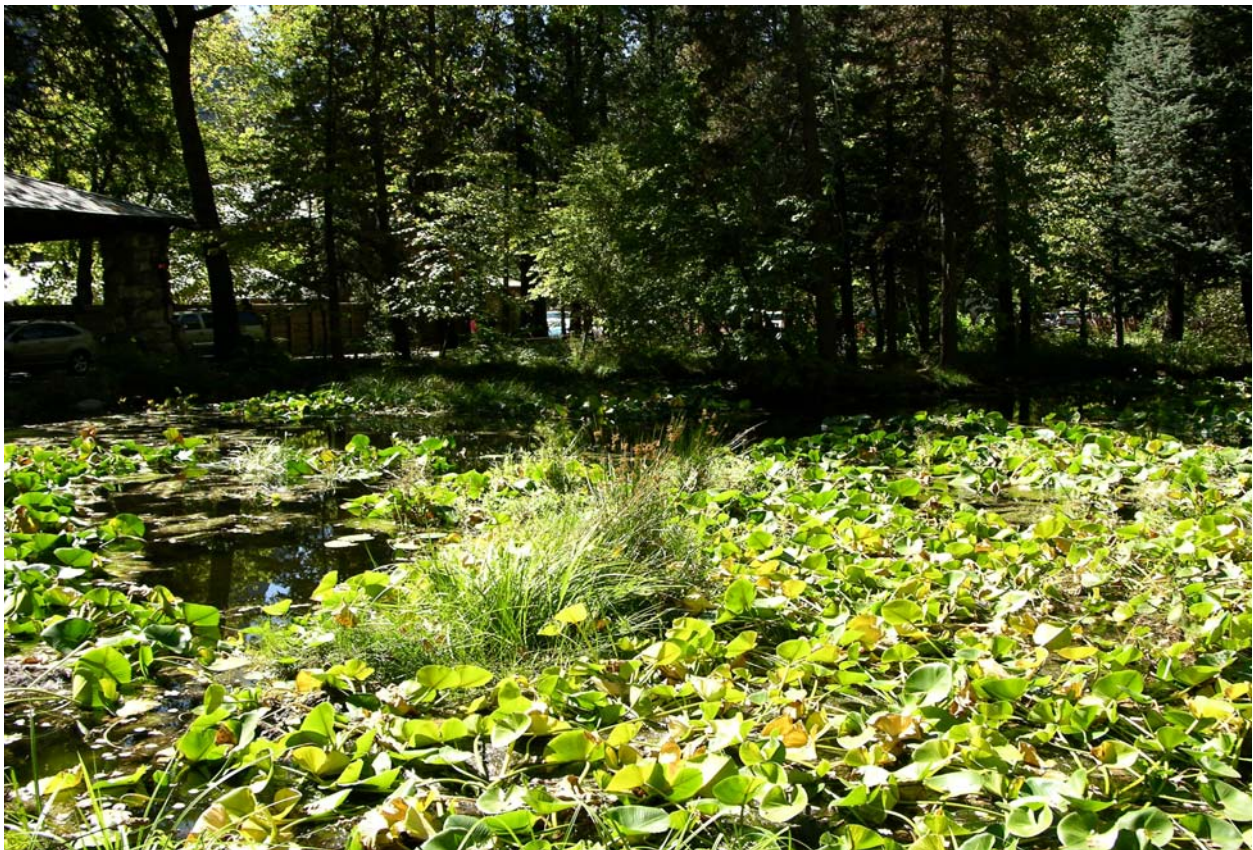
Mark A Butler //Signed Copy on File// 11/3/05  
**Compliance Program Manager Date**

Larry Harris //Signed Copy on File// 11/9/05  
**for Chief, Project Management**

**Attachment 1**



Historic Photo of the Ahwahnee Pond



Present Day Ahwahnee Pond looking west



**A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING**

- 1. Project Title & ID:** Awahanee Hotel Pond Cleanout 2006-001/PEPC #13727
- 2. Project Manager:** Steve Thompson
- 3. Project Description** Drain the Ahwahnee Pond and remove all aquatic vegetation and accumulated mud and debris, using hand labor. Materials removed from the pond would be removed from the park and taken to the county landfill. In concert with this action, NPS Wildlife Management would remove all bullfrogs and their tadpoles that remain from this summer's eradication efforts. Animals thus collected would be killed humanely through chemical euthansia.
  
- 4. Project Location and Area of Potential Effect, Yosemite Valley, Ahwahnee Hotel, Pond**

<b>5. Attached Sensitive* Information</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Explanation/Source/Notes</b>
a. Maps		X	
b. Drawings		X	
c. Site Plans		X	
d. Photographs		X	
e. Sample		X	
f. List of Materials		X	
g. Other (Explain)		X	

\* Sensitive documents not for duplication or distribution beyond park management, subject matter experts, and the project statutory compliance file.

**B. DESCRIPTION OF EFFECTS**

	Yes	No	N/A	Explanation/Notes
<b>1. Has the Area of Potential Effect been surveyed to identify cultural resources?</b> If Yes, provide reference for the Survey (s).	X			Ahwahnee Hotel National Landmark
a. Would the proposed action affect a known cultural resource?				

<b>2. List all Cultural Resources in the Area of Potential Effect:</b>	Affected?		Explanation/Note
	Yes	No	
a. Ahwahnee Hotel	X		Maintenance

<b>3. List resources in the Area of Potential Effect to which American Indians attach cultural and religious significance:</b>	Affected?		Explanation/Note
	Yes	No	
a. None			

<b>4. The proposed action will:</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Explanation/Note
• Destroy, remove, or alter features or elements from a historic structure		X		
• Replace historic features/elements in kind		X		
• Add nonhistoric features/elements to a historic structure		X		
• Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (including terrain)		X		
• Add nonhistoric features/elements (including visual, audible, or atmospheric) to a historic setting or cultural landscape		X		
• Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible, or alter associated terrain		X		
• Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible, or alter associated terrain		X		
• Begin or contribute to the deterioration of historic fabric, terrain, setting, landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources		X		
• Involve a real property transaction affecting historic cultural properties (i.e., the exchange, sale, or lease of land or structures)		X		
• Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources		X		
• Other				

5. Describe any measures that are incorporated as part of this project that will be taken to prevent or minimize loss or impairment of prehistoric or historic fabric, setting, integrity, or data:

**Checklist Preparer:** Jeannette Simons

**Date:** 10-27-05

**Title:** Historic Preservation Officer

**C. SPECIALIST SECTION**

**Specialists:** Your comments here (or attached) show that you have reviewed this proposal for conformity with requirements of *National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106*; with the *1995 Servicewide Programmatic Agreement* (if applicable); with applicable parts of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*; with the *NPS Management Policies* and *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*; and have given your best professional advice about this project and the issues relevant to the Section 106 process, including identification and evaluation of historic properties and further consultation needs.

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**Archeologist**

Name: **Laura Kirn**

Date: 10/27/05

Comments:

Ground Disturbance Involved      Yes:              No: **X**

Assessment of Effect: **No Effect**

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Archeologist:       //Signed Copy of File//      

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**Cultural Anthropologist**

Name:

Date:

Comments:

Assessment of Effect:

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Cultural Anthropologist: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Curator**

Name:

Date:

Comments:

Assessment of Effect:

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Curator: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Historian**

Name: **Charles Palmer**

Date: 10/27/05

Comments:

Assessment of Effect: **No Adverse Effect**

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Historian:       //Signed Copy of File//      

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**Historic Architect**

Name: **Sueann Brown**

Date: 10/27/05

Comments:

Assessment of Effect: **No Adverse Effect**

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Historic Architect:       //Signed Copy of File//      

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**Historic Landscape Architect**

Name: **Steve Torgerson**

Date: 10/27/05

Comments:

Assessment of Effect: **No Adverse Effect**

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Historic Landscape Architect:       //Signed Copy of File//

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**Preservation Specialist**

Name: **Doug Martin**

Date: 10/27/05

Comments: No Comments; No Concerns.

Assessment of Effect:

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of Preservation Specialist:           //Signed Copy of File//          

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Name:

Date:

Comments:

Assessment of Effect:

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name:

Date:

Comments:

Assessment of Effect:

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

Signature of \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE DIVISION AND PARK 106  
COORDINATOR REVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. Review by specialists:** The appropriate subject-matter experts have reviewed the project and entered their comments and recommendations in Section C, above.

*The foregoing assessment is adequate: the proposed action is consistent with all applicable NPS management policies, standards, guidelines, or US DOI standards and guidelines, Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, or others, and incorporates measures to avoid Adverse Effects.*

**Reviewed and Accepted by:**

**Signature:**     //Signed Copy of File//                          **Date:**     10-26-05      
Chief of Resources Management & Science Division

- 2. Assessment of Effects: No effect.**

- 3. Compliance Requirements:** The following is the park's assessment of Section 106 process needs and requirements for this undertaking.

**Standard 36 CFR Part 800 Consultation**

Consultation under 36 CFR is needed subsequent to the preparation of this form and its review by appropriate cultural resource management advisors.

**Undertaking related to the 1995 NPS Programmatic Agreement**

The above action meets all conditions for a programmatic exclusion under Stipulation IV of the 1995 NPS programmatic agreement.

**Plan-Related Undertaking**

Consultation and review of the proposed undertaking were completed in the context of a plan review process, in accordance with the 1995 NPS programmatic agreement and 36 CFR Part 800.

**Undertaking Related to Another Agreement**

The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under a document such as a statewide agreement written in accordance with 37 CFR Part 800.7 or counterpart regulations.

**Agreement:**

**Flood-Recovery Related Undertaking**

The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under the letter-based agreement between the NPS, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Council for Historic Preservation for "Highwater 97" flood repair and recovery

**Undertaking Related to the 1999 Yosemite Programmatic Agreement**

The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under the park's 1999 programmatic agreement for planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance; the undertaking meets the stipulations identified in Article VII.C.2.

**4. Project Stipulations and Conditions**

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

**None.**

**Recommended by Park Section 106 Coordinator:**

Name: **Jeannette Simons**

Title: **Historic Preservation Officer**

Signature:     //Signed Copy of File//     Date:     10-27-05    

**E. SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL**

*The proposed work conforms to NPS Management Policies and NPS-28 and I approve the recommendations, stipulations, and conditions noted in Section B of this form.*

**Signature of Superintendent:** R. Kevin Cann, Acting //Signed Copy of File//

**Date:**     11/19/05