



Finding of No Significant Impact

Replace Big Stump Entrance Station Kings Canyon National Park April 2009

This Finding of No Significant Impact documents the decision of the National Park Service (NPS) to replace and construct Big Stump Entrance Station and the determination that no significant impacts on the human environment are associated with that decision. The purpose of the proposed action is to replace the former Big Stump entrance station with a fully functional entrance station, which is needed to safely and efficiently meet the operational requirements to serve visitors, provide information and collect fees at this gateway to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Purpose and Need for Federal Action

The Big Stump entrance station is the main entrance to Kings Canyon National Park and to the northern portion of Giant Sequoia National Monument in the Sequoia National Forest. Each year, Big Stump entrance station personnel are responsible for contacting more than 600,000 visitors entering the park and monument in over 180,000 vehicles. The Big Stump entrance station is the primary point of contact where visitors pay entrance fees, receive maps and information on recreation, facilities, services, road conditions and resource protection. During the winter, the entrance station has been a critical location for visitors to receive updated road conditions and apply chains before proceeding into the park.

The NPS began looking at options for replacing the Big Stump entrance station with a new structure in late 2004. At that time, a number of operational shortcomings had become apparent including the repetitive springtime flooding of the fee office and the lack of a second lane and kiosk to manage the growing summer crowds. The idea was to construct an improved entrance station at the current location.

In October 2005, before the planning process to replace these structures was complete, the Big Stump entrance station was closed due to safety concerns caused by a hazardous giant sequoia tree. Based on evaluation of the giant sequoia by forestry professionals, it was determined that all or part of the tree might fall into the entrance station area, presenting a serious hazard to visitors and employees.

The tree underwent minor crown reduction to reduce but not eliminate the hazard and entrance station operations were moved to interim summer and winter locations. In summer from mid-May to October, the interim entrance station is located at the Big Stump picnic area, one-half mile east of the former entrance station. Visitors access the entrance kiosks by making a left hand turn into the parking lot, circling around to the kiosks and exiting at the same point from which they entered. In winter, a kiosk is placed in the parking lot in front of the Kings Canyon Visitor Center, approximately 2.5 miles east of the former entrance station location. Visitors access this kiosk by turning into the Kings Canyon Visitor Center parking lot, parking and walking to the kiosk window.

Re-establishing a fully operational entrance station in the Big Stump area would effectively support essential park operations, provide for employee and visitor health and safety, and reduce impact on the parks' natural and cultural resources.

Alternatives Analyzed

The Environmental Assessment, *Replace Big Stump Entrance Station* analyzed three alternatives, Alternative 1: No Action, Alternative 2: Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site, and Alternative 3: Construct New Entrance Station below the Junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway. The Environmental Assessment disclosed the potential environmental consequences that may result from implementation of each alternative.

Alternative A: No-Action Alternative (Continuation of Present Management)

This alternative would continue entrance station operations at the two interim locations. A winter chain up area would be signed and available near the former entrance station, out of the fall path of the giant sequoia and approximately 2.5 miles prior to reaching the entrance station at the Kings Canyon Visitor Center.

Alternative B: Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative B, the park would construct a new entrance station at a site about 100 feet downhill (south/southwest) from the former entrance station site, along California Highway 180. The new site would be outside of the hazard area (fall zone) for the giant sequoia tree. The section of highway before and after the entrance station would be realigned for a total distance of about 2,000 feet. The winter tire chain up area would be expanded adjacent to the current location at the former Big Stump entrance station. Utilities would be trenched from the former entrance station, about 200 feet away.

Alternative C: Construct New Entrance Station below the Junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway

Under Alternative C, the park would construct a new entrance station at a site approximately 2,000 feet west of the junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway, farther into the park than the former or Alternative B entrance station locations. Due to the area topography, this is the only feasible building site along Highway 180 between the junction and the former Big Stump entrance station site that can accommodate an entrance station. This location is approximately 1.4 miles east of the former entrance station. The highway would be widened at the new entrance station location and the road realigned to accommodate this change. A separate area for vehicles to put on or adjust tire chains in winter would be constructed approximately 350 feet before reaching the proposed entrance station site. Utilities would be brought in from the nearest location, about 4,000 feet away.

Selected Alternative

Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site

Alternative B would construct a new entrance station at a site approximately 100 feet downhill (south/southwest) along California Highway 180 from the former Big Stump entrance station site. Part of the proposed construction area is on the site previously occupied by the Big Stump Lodge, which operated from around the 1920s to the 1950s. This location is outside of the hazard area (fall zone) for the giant sequoia tree.

This previously disturbed site is estimated to be approximately one acre. The proposed entrance station facilities (preliminary design) would require a footprint of approximately 1.2 acres with a possibility of 20-25% more or less depending on further design development. Some soils would be

partially excavated to construct the foundation for the new fee collection office. A park archeologist would be onsite during ground disturbing activities, in areas known to have the potential for archeological resources. Should previously unknown archeological resources be uncovered during construction, all work would immediately cease in the discovery area and the parks' archeologist would be consulted, as recommended in the SHIPO's letter of concurrence. If an underground gas tank were discovered during construction, hazardous waste clean up would be done per applicable local, state and federal regulations using accepted procedures.

The facility would be comprised of one to three kiosks. A primary kiosk, which will provide a visitor service window, a secure office for processing fees collected, a storage room and an employee restroom. The primary kiosk would measure approximately 30 feet by 8 feet and be located on a traffic island approximately 60 feet long. The secondary kiosks, parallel to the first, would consist of a visitor service area plus storage for supplies and handout materials for use in that kiosk. These kiosks would measure approximately 10 feet by 8 feet and be on a traffic island approximately 60 feet long. Designs would accommodate the possible expansion to a third kiosk should one become necessary in the future due to increased visitation levels and traffic demands. A separate building to house a backup generator and to provide storage space would be constructed adjacent to the road and partially overlapping the site where the Big Stump Lodge area once was.

The entrance station would be designed to allow employees to efficiently and safely contact visitors, collect entrance fees and provide maps, brochures and safety information. An administrative bypass lane would be built in both directions to reduce delays for emergency vehicles, commercial delivery vehicles and administrative traffic. The kiosks would be designed to meet the ergonomic requirements of personnel as they move around the space: reaching for maps and brochures, extending from the kiosk to collect fees and hand out printed information, and using the cash register, phone and two way radio inside the kiosk.

The kiosks would also be designed to comply with federal accessibility laws (Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the 1968 Architectural Barriers Act). Design elements would include accessible paths between parking and kiosk, entry space without curbs or surface changes greater than ½ inch or with ramps provided where necessary, adequate wheelchair turning space and accessibility within the structure and restroom. The design would ensure that phones and station material meet accessibility standards and are within reach.

The kiosks would have a ventilation system fully able to mitigate employee exposure to harmful vehicle emissions. In addition, indoor environmental design standards call for a carbon dioxide monitoring device, materials with low emissions would be used in construction, and thermal comfort controls would be installed. Design will accommodate the future installation of a security system.

In winter, Alternative B would allow entrance station personnel to contact visitors regarding vehicle compliance with chain or snow tire requirements necessary for driving through the park. The chain up area would be relocated out of the hazard area (fall zone) for the giant sequoia tree. There would be six parking spaces for employees and sufficient space for a snowplow to safely turn around. Power, water and phone are available from the former Big Stump entrance station site, approximately 200 feet away.

The highway would require realignment and would be designed to accommodate the required infrastructure of the new entrance station in terms of width and lane placement. Sight distances would be examined by traffic engineers, and the potential danger from traffic backups reduced. Preliminary estimates are that approximately 2,000 feet of highway would be realigned: about 1,000 feet east and west of the proposed location. Signage would be added warning vehicles to observe safe speeds and be alert to possible congestion.

The road at the former Big Stump entrance station would be narrowed and the parking area removed in order to prevent vehicles from stopping in the the hazard area (fall zone) for the giant sequoia tree. Highway 180 would be realigned at this location to minimize exposure to roadside tree hazards.

Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

The National Park Service considered several additional alternatives to the proposed action that were dismissed from further consideration because they did not meet the project's purpose and need or resulted in unacceptable impacts to park resources. These included:

Eliminating the Entrance Station

Under this alternative, no entrance fees would be collected at any location in Kings Canyon National Park. The only structures providing visitor contact would be the Kings Canyon and Cedar Grove Visitor Centers. The road where the Big Stump entrance station was formerly sited would be narrowed to prevent visitors from stopping in the the hazard area (fall zone) for the giant sequoia tree. The chain-up area discussed in the no-action alternative would remain unchanged. No new chain-up area would be provided. This proposed alternative does not meet the stated need of contacting visitors to provide information on visitor safety and natural resource protection.

This alternative does not meet the stated need of collecting entrance fees for the parks. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are designated fee parks and as such, Congress expects the park to collect fees and to operate partially from this revenue source. Eliminating this fee revenue source would greatly impact the ability of managers to provide services to enhance visitors' experience and provide for their safety. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further study.

Construct New Entrance Station at Happy Gap

This alternative would construct a new entrance station at Happy Gap near the Lake Sequoia turnoff, three miles west of the former entrance on Highway 180 and outside the park boundary. This is the first feasible site below the Big Stump Lodge site. The highway would be widened in order to provide an acceleration lane for uphill traffic to merge safely. This is technically feasible, but would require large, expensive fills and/or fill walls. The road where the Big Stump entrance station was formerly sited would be narrowed to prevent visitors from stopping in the giant sequoia hazard tree target zone. The interim chain-up area discussed in the no-action alternative would remain unchanged and would continue to be used as the chain-up area.

Since the proposed new entrance station site would be outside the park, agreements would be negotiated with the Forest Service, YMCA, and California Department of Transportation. This new entrance station would be located on the apex of a high-speed curve and would have insufficient sight distance. The operation of multiple entry lanes would have the potential to increase the risk

of accidents because traffic would be making left turns onto the Sequoia Lake access road and simultaneously merging after the entrance station.

This proposed alternative did not meet the stated need of providing a safe and efficient entrance station; therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further study.

Construct New Entrance Station at the Junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway

This alternative would construct a new entrance station at the Junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway. The road at the former entrance station would be narrowed to prevent visitors from stopping in the giant sequoia hazard tree fall zone. The interim chain-up area discussed in the no-action alternative would remain unchanged. No new chain control area would be provided.

This site presented significant construction problems. To address these problems, a large amount of rock would have to be removed, the super-elevation of the existing road would have to be eliminated, and large amounts of fill would be required. There is no local source for that fill, so it would have to be acquired from outside the park and would have potential to contain the seeds of exotic plants, which could spread into the protected ecosystem of the parks.

The construction of this alternative would result in significant natural resource impacts. Power and phone would have to be brought in from about 2,000 feet away, increasing expense and the environmental impact to park resources.

The cut and fill required under this alternative would be prohibitively expensive, and creates unnecessary environmental impacts. This alternative does not meet the stated need of providing a safe and efficient entrance station while having the least impact on park natural resources and values and was eliminated from further study.

Build Two New Entrance Stations beyond the Junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway

This alternative proposed two new entrances stations, one at Quail Flat on the Generals Highway and one near Grant Grove on Highway 180. These sites are located beyond the junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway; the Quail Flat site is 4 miles from the junction on the Generals Highway and the Grant Grove site is one mile from the junction on Highway 180.

The road where the former entrance station was sited would be narrowed to prevent visitors from stopping in the giant sequoia hazard tree fall zone. The interim chain-up area discussed in the no-action alternative would remain unchanged. No new chain control area would be provided. All traffic going to Grant Grove or toward Giant Forest would pass one of these entrance stations. Construction of two sites would potentially double construction and operational costs.

This proposed alternative would increase the level of environmental impacts by constructing in two separate locations and would be economically infeasible; therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further study.

Build Two New Entrance Stations: One at Lost Grove, One at Cedar Grove

This alternative would construct two new entrance stations, one at Lost Grove on the Generals Highway and one at Cedar Grove near the end of Highway 180 in Kings Canyon National Park. All traffic going to Sequoia National Park would pass through the Lost Grove entrance station.

However, only traffic going all the way to Cedar Grove would pass through the Cedar Grove station. Visitors going only to Grant Grove or the national monument would not be contacted to pay entrance fees or be given necessary information on resource protection or safety hazards. Operating two entrance stations significantly increases the costs to carry out operations.

The road where the Big Stump entrance station was formerly sited would be narrowed to prevent visitors from stopping in the giant sequoia hazard tree fall zone. The interim chain-up area discussed in the no action alternative would remain unchanged. No new chain-up area would be provided.

This proposed alternative would double the level of environmental impacts by constructing in two separate locations and would be prohibitively expensive; therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further study.

Alternatives Involving the Former Big Stump Entrance Station Location

The NPS considered two alternatives that would allow for the entrance station to be located in its former location while mitigating for the safety hazard created by the giant sequoia. These alternatives included attempting to stabilize the hazardous giant sequoia or pruning and reducing the size of the hazardous giant sequoia. These alternatives were dismissed for the following reasons:

- Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks natural resource professionals and an independent consulting arborist concluded that stabilizing the bole of this tree is impossible due to its extreme size. Even if the bole could be stabilized, it would be impossible to stabilize the upper branches to prevent their failure.
- The park forester determined that pruning this giant sequoia would not adequately mitigate the risk to park personnel working at the former Big Stump entrance station site without jeopardizing the survival of the tree

Alternatives Involving Removal of the Giant Sequoia

The NPS considered two alternatives that would involve the removal of the hazardous giant sequoia. These alternatives were dismissed for the fundamental reason that removing a prominent giant sequoia that is visible to and appreciated by tens of thousands of visitors entering the parks each year is contrary to the stated mission of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks:

Protect forever the greater Sierran ecosystem—including the ancient sequoia groves and high Sierra regions of the parks—and its natural evolution, and to provide appropriate opportunities to present and future generations to experience and understand park resources and values.

In addition, giant sequoias are part of the stated significance of the parks:

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are special and unique places because they have the largest giant sequoia trees and groves in the world, including the world's largest tree...

Additionally, it would be contrary to National Park Service Management Policies, 2006 (5.3.5.2) which support maintaining Cultural Landscapes and preserving their significant physical attributes....with treatment decisions taking into consideration both the natural and built characteristics of a landscape.

The National Park Service Management Policies, 2006 and the parks' mission and significance combined with the relative rarity of giant sequoias of the size and magnitude of the giant sequoia at Big Stump, make it impossible for the NPS to consider removing this tree in order to construct an entrance station at this location.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying criteria identified in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act to each alternative considered. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the environmentally preferred alternative would best: (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintaining, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

The National Park Service has considered all alternatives in this analysis in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act and Council on Environmental Quality regulations (Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, Section 1505.2) and has determined that Alternative B: Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site, as presented in the Environmental Assessment, *Replace Big Stump Entrance Station* is environmentally preferable. After review of potential resource and visitor impacts and developing mitigation for impacts to natural and cultural resources, the selected alternative achieves the greatest balance between (1) resources and impacts necessary to accomplish the objective; (2) reducing risks to public health and safety; (3) providing aesthetically pleasing surroundings and (4) preserving visitor service opportunities and accessibility for a variety of users.

The No Action Alternative would not accomplish the objective and it would not reduce the existing safety hazard, created by the current traffic pattern. The current situation is not sustainable.

The Alternative C: Construct New Entrance Station below the Junction of Highway 180 and the Generals Highway would accomplish the objective, but it would involve significantly more ground disturbance (trenching for utilities and realignment of traffic lanes) additionally it would require vehicles to negotiate a section of steep curves before reaching a chain-up area creating a potential safety issue, for these reasons it was not selected.

Non-impairment of Park Resources

Pursuant to the 1916 Organic Act, the National Park Service has a management responsibility "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of future generations." Therefore, the National Park Service cannot take an action that would impair park resources or values.

Based on the analysis provided in the Environmental Assessment, *Replace Big Stump Entrance Station* the National Park Service concludes that implementation of Alternative B: Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site, would have no major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Kings Canyon National Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of Kings Canyon National Park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's General Management Plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents. Consequently, implementation of the proposed action will not violate the National Park Service Organic Act.

Why the Selected Alternative Will Not Have a Significant Effect on the Human Environment

Part of the proposed construction area is on the site previously occupied by the Big Stump Lodge, which operated from around the 1920s to the 1950s. This previously disturbed site is estimated to be approximately one acre. Should previously unknown archeological resources be uncovered during construction, all work will immediately cease in the discovery area and the parks' archeologist would be consulted, as recommended in the SHPO's letter of concurrence to a "conditional finding of no significant impact".

No major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that would require analysis in an environmental impact statement. The selected action (preferred alternative) analyzed impacts are summarized below.

Summary of Environmental Consequences, Potential Environmental Impacts

| Impacts | Alternative B <i>Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site</i> |
|-----------------------|--|
| Soil Resources | Site disturbance as a result of construction activity would cause minor, localized and short-term adverse impacts to soil resources. Permanent construction of buildings, foundations and covering areas with asphalt would cause minor, localized long-term adverse impacts to soil resources. |
| Air Quality | Minor, localized, and short-term adverse impacts as a result of construction activity. In winter and summer: Minor, localized and long-term beneficial impacts as a result of reducing wait times for idling vehicles. No impact to the parks' Class 1 air quality designation. |
| Soundscapes | Minor, localized and short-term adverse impacts to soundscapes as a result of construction in two different areas. Minor, localized, short and long-term adverse impacts to soundscapes as a result of the presence of an entrance station. Compared to the no-action alternative, there would be minor, localized and short and long-term beneficial impacts as a result of more efficiently contacting visitors entering the parks, reducing the time they spend in the immediate area. |

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| Impacts | Alternative B <i>Construct New Entrance Station at the Big Stump Lodge Site</i> |
| Vegetation and Non-Native species | Minor, localized and short and long-term adverse impacts. |
| Special Status Species | Negligible, localized short and long-term adverse impacts to special status species. This alternative would have no impact on any of the listed species with potential to occur in Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks. Would not impact any of the listed species' primary food stocks, their prey species, or foraging areas. No impact on designated critical habitats. |
| Recreation and Visitor Use Experience | Negligible, localized and short-term adverse impacts to recreation and visitor use experience as a result of construction activity. Minor, localized and park-wide long-term beneficial impacts to recreation and visitor use experience once construction is complete. |
| Cultural Resources | Long-term, negligible and localized adverse impacts as a result of construction activities and site location. Short and long-term, negligible and localized beneficial impacts as a result of data gathering activities should any cultural material be found, recovered and studied. |
| Lightscapes | Short and long-term negligible and localized adverse impacts on night sky and lightscape management. Compared to the no-action alternative, there would be negligible, short and long-term beneficial impacts on night sky and lightscape management. |
| Giant Sequoia Groves | Negligible short and long-term localized adverse impacts. |
| Health and Safety | Short-term and minor adverse impacts as a result of construction activity. Long-term minor localized beneficial impacts as a result of reducing traffic hazards. Negligible, localized short and long-term adverse impacts as a result of the hazard giant sequoia remaining. |
| Scenic Values | Short-term, negligible localized adverse impacts as a result of construction activity. Long-term, minor and localized beneficial impacts as a result of an entrance station designed to meet parks' architectural character guidelines. Continued presence of giant sequoia tree provides moderate short and long-term localized beneficial impacts. |
| Park and Other Agency Operations | Impact is detectable but would not have a substantial impact. |

Mitigation

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are designed to prevent or minimize adverse impacts or to contain impacts within acceptable limits during and after project implementation. The following are mitigations that would be incorporated into project implementation. These mitigations and guidelines are specific to the project area and to the natural and cultural resource issues analyzed in this document. The following mitigation measures would be implemented to reduce the effects of the proposed project on natural, cultural, and social resources and will be part of the construction documents specifications, which will contain submittal requirement and reviews as part of the quality assurance/control program overseen by the park's project manager as part of best industry practices for construction management.

General Considerations

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|---|
| Construction staging areas would be identified and limited to previously impacted areas. Invasive non-native plants in and around the staging areas would be controlled. | Park <i>Project Manager</i> |
| Construction debris (i.e., demolition debris from former Big Stump station, excess mixed cement, saw dust and chips from treated wood, packaging of materials) would be disposed of at appropriate areas outside the park or stockpiled at approved locations within the park to be recycled in future projects. | Contractor |
| A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed to mitigate impacts from runoff. | Contractor |
| All disturbed areas would be restored as nearly as possible to pre-construction conditions shortly after construction activities are completed. Former road alignments would be regraded to match surrounding, natural topography. | Contractor/Park <i>Restoration</i> |
| Prior to starting work each day, all combustion powered equipment would be inspected for leaks (fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, etc) and all necessary repairs would be made before the commencement of work. | Contractor |
| Sustainable design principles would be used that meet all applicable Uniform Building Codes, National Fire Protection Association codes and Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements. | Contractor/Park <i>A/E & Project Manager</i> |
| The proposed buildings and structures would comply with applicable regulations concerning fire safety and lighting. | Contractor/Park <i>A/E & Project Manager</i> |
| The new structure would use materials to comply with the parks' Architectural Character Guidelines. | Contractor/Park <i>A/E & Project Manager</i> |
| The project manager would ensure that all employees are instructed in safe work habits and in maintaining a clean and safe work site. | Park/Contractor <i>Project Manager</i> |
| A traffic control plan would be implemented. | Contractor |
| Spilled hazardous materials would be cleaned up immediately and would not be allowed to seep into the soil or reach open water sources. | Contractor |

Wildlife and Special Status Species

No night work will be performed.

Visitor Experience

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|-------------------|
| During construction, traffic would pass through the construction area in a single lane with flaggers alternating the movement of traffic up to a maximum wait of 20 minutes. | Contractor |
| Traffic would be restored to two way traffic on the evenings, weekends, and holidays when possible. When not possible, one lane would be open with stop lights controlling traffic not to exceed 20 minute delay cycles. | Contractor |
| Safe line-of-sight would be maintained throughout the construction project. | Contractor |
| Equipment will be staged in non-visitor use areas. | Contractor |
| Any trees that are cut would be flush cut and camouflaged to reduce visibility. | Contractor |

Lightscapes

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Facility would comply with park lighting guidelines in order to control light pollution. | Contractor/Park A/E & Project Manager |
| Determine and use the right amount of light for the task and no more. | Contractor/Park Project Manager |
| Design and/or install lighting that insures that glare is minimized. | Contractor/Park A/E & Project Manager |
| Shine lights downward so to minimize impact to night sky. | Contractor/Park A/E & Project Manager |
| Use energy efficient light sources (e.g., low pressure sodium lamps). | Contractor/Park A/E & Project Manager |
| Facility design would ensure that only the indirect glow from lighting is visible and not the point sources of the lights. | Contractor/Park A/E & Project Manager |
| Facility design would incorporate eaves and other architectural measure so light is not reflected up into the night sky. | Contractor/Park A/E & Project Manager |

Air Quality

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|--------------------------|
| During construction, the contractor would be required to implement dust control procedures including watering down all active construction areas as necessary to prevent airborne dust. Watering would be sufficient to prevent most airborne dust from leaving the site. Increased watering frequency may be necessary whenever wind speeds exceed 15 MPH. Reclaimed water would be used whenever possible. | Contractor |
| Vehicles exceeding 10,000 lbs GVW not actively engaged in tasks would not be allowed to idle engines for longer than 5 minutes during construction activities (California Vehicle Code Section 2485). | Contractor |

Soundscapes

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|---|--------------------------|
| Contractors would be required to install and maintain mufflers and sound attenuation devices on all equipment and vehicles. | Contractor |
| Portable wooden sound screens would be erected to minimize particularly noisy operations such as air compressors. | Contractor |

Cultural Resources

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|--------------------------|
| Prior to any construction the site would be surveyed for the presence of cultural resources and allow for the recovery of potential museum objects. | Park Archeologist |
| A park archeologist would be onsite during ground disturbing construction activities, in areas with known potential for archeological resources, as determined by the park's archeologist. | Park Archeologist |
| A park archeologist would instruct work crews of the penalties for illegally collecting artifacts or intentionally damaging any archeological or historic property. Construction workers and supervisors would be advised of the laws and guidelines and special sensitivity to ensure protection of cultural resources. | Park Project Manager |
| If previously unknown archeological resources are uncovered during construction, all work would immediately cease in the discovery area and the parks' archeologist would be contacted. | Park Project Manager |

Vegetation and Non-Native Species

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|--------------------------|
| Before construction begins, a qualified plant ecologist will survey the project site to look for non-native species of concern, which could be in the area. If any of these species were found, mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate impacts by these plants would be implemented under direction of the parks' restoration ecologist and non-native plant specialist. | Park Plant Ecologist |
| Sources of rock, sand, gravel, earth, soil, or other imported natural material would be inspected for invasive non-native plants prior to acceptance. | Park Project Manager |

| Vegetation and Non Native Species (cont) Mitigation | Responsible Party |
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| Topsoil would be removed from areas of construction; stored and replaced at the end of the project. The topsoil would be reapplied to the former location. | Contractor |
| Once construction is completed, disturbed areas within the construction zone would, to the extent possible, be rehabilitated and landscaped to restore them to natural conditions. | Contractor/Park <i>Plant Ecologist</i> |
| Following project completion, a qualified plant ecologist would continue to survey the site for one to three years for invasive non-native vegetation. | Park <i>Plant Ecologist</i> |

Health and Safety

| Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|--|---|
| Hazards would be mitigated by instructing all workers in safe work habits and maintaining a clean and safe work site. Traffic hazards associated with construction activities would be mitigated by appropriate signs and personnel to safely warn visitors about hazards and direct them to safe areas. | Park <i>Project Manager</i> |
| Should any hazardous material (e.g., abandoned gas tank from the old lodge) be found during construction, work would stop until the hazard is evaluated by qualified personnel. Hazardous waste clean-up would be done per applicable local, state and federal regulations using accepted procedures. | Contractor/Park <i>Project Manager</i> |

Public Involvement and Coordination

Public Involvement

Prior to the writing of the environmental assessment, this project was announced to the public on March 1, 2006 when Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks sent out a general press release. In addition, the announcement was sent to targeted interested parties. Two comments were received and identified as not substantive and out of the scope of this project.

Internal and interagency scoping was also conducted, responses were generally positive and in favor of this project being completed. This included park managers, ranger supervisors and resource specialists in the park, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California State Department of Fish and Game and the California State Historic Preservation Office.

Public Comment

The Environmental Assessment, *Replace Big Stump Entrance Station* was made available for public review and comment during a 60-day period ending January 4, 2009. A press release was issued to inform the interested public that the Environmental Assessment, *Replace Big Stump Entrance Station* was available for review and comment. The EA was available on the park website and printed copies were sent to local libraries in Three Rivers and Visalia. Copies were also sent to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors office, Sequoia National Forest, and all Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park visitor centers. There were no requests from the public for either more information or copies of the printed EA.

| Vegetation and Non Native Species (cont) Mitigation | Responsible Party |
|---|---|
| The contractor would submit to the contracting officer a list of proposed sources for import materials 30 calendar days in advance of importing material. | Contractor |
| The list shall also include the end use and any temporary storage requirements of those materials. | Contractor |
| Natural Resources staff would inspect sources of materials that pose a risk, either by their end use or storage requirements, of allowing invasive non-native plants (also known as noxious weeds) to establish in the park. Supplier would certify the material does not contain non-native plants. At the discretion of the contracting officer, potentially contaminated materials may be accepted if mitigating measures are implemented. Mitigation might include stripping the top 12 inches of source material, requiring fresh material stored less than 1 month, or sterilizing the material. | Park <i>Project Manager</i> |
| Contaminated materials that contain seeds and have an end-use on the surface, and cannot otherwise be mitigated, would require sterilization before importing to the park. | Contractor |
| Import material shall be shipped directly from the source to the park without intermediary storage or staging. | Contractor |
| Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials. | Contractor |
| No imported hay or straw bales would be used during revegetation, silt protection, or erosion control efforts. Wood excelsior products and straw filter logs and blankets that are certified as fumigated and weed-free may be used. | Contractor |
| Materials must be protected from acquiring invasive non-native plant seeds from outside vegetation during transportation. | Contractor |
| Construction materials would be inspected for soil and plant debris. Dirty materials would be cleaned with pressure washing or other means. Construction materials that could acquire seeds from surrounding areas would be covered. | Park <i>Project Manager</i> |
| Project manager would inspect equipment for compliance prior to entry into the park, and reject equipment that is not adequately cleaned. | Park <i>Project Manager</i> |
| Approved staging areas would be surveyed for invasive non-native plants. | Park <i>Plant Ecologist</i> |
| All staging and construction sites would be surveyed for invasive non-native plants one to three years after project completion. Populations of invasive non-native plants would be removed. | Park/Contractor <i>Plant Ecologist</i> |
| When trenching for utilities, the operator would make every effort to detect the presence of tree roots prior to damaging them. | Contractor |
| All live roots 6 inches diameter or larger in the entire excavated area shall be retained and remain undamaged. Roots that are to be retained shall be covered with wet burlap until the excavation is backfilled. Roots between 2 inches and 6 inches diameter shall be given a clean straight cut on the exposed end with a saw prior to backfilling. | Contractor |
| Individual trees would be tagged for removal. | Contractor |
| Litter and duff would be removed from project areas and stored for later replacement over topsoil. | Contractor |

One comment was received from the US Forest Service, correcting the name of a geographical location from *Hume Lake Recreation District* to *Hume Lake Ranger District*. Corrections were made to all electronically available copies of the EA on the park and PEPC websites; notations were made to the published copies correcting the citation.

Consultation and Coordination

The National Park Service reviewed the special status species list contained on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website. None of the listed species are expected to be adversely impacted by the project alternatives.

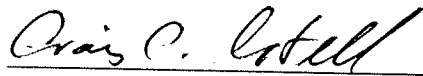
The National Park Service has consulted with the California State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the potentially significant historic Big Stump Lodge site, that office advised in their letter of October 17, 2008 that they believed a "conditional finding of no significant impact" to be appropriate. The condition being, that a qualified park archeologist would monitor ground disturbing activities associated with the selected alternative. (This is incorporated into the action plan for the selected Alternative B).

Conclusion

The selected action (preferred alternative) does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement. The selected action (preferred alternative) will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are considered short term and negligible to moderate in intensity. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the selected action (preferred alternative) to reduce or eliminate impacts. There are no foreseen significant adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, historic properties, either listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP, or other unique characteristics of the park. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law, nor will it cause impairment of park resources or values.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for this project and, thus, will not be prepared. The expected start date for this construction project is 2011.

Recommended:

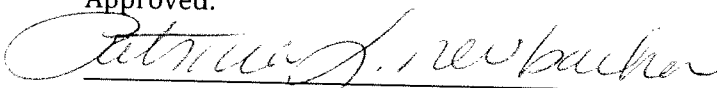


Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

14 APR 2009

Date

Approved:



Regional Director, Pacific West Region, National Park Service

April 22, 2009

Date

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