

Executive Summary

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared an environmental assessment identifying and evaluating four alternatives for the rehabilitation of Badger Pass Ski Lodge. This document is intended to meet the requirements of Section 102(2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Since its construction in 1935, Badger Pass Ski Lodge has supported winter recreation at the Badger Pass Ski Area in Yosemite National Park, a site that is historically significant as one of California's first developed downhill ski areas. Located at the base of Monroe Meadow, the original ski lodge building is characteristic of NPS Rustic architecture with Swiss chalet influences and is an important contributing feature to the Badger Pass Ski Area historic site. The building continues to function as an active ski lodge, and also serves as a summer base camp for the National Park Service-administered Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. Over time, a combination of environmental stress, heavy use, and inadequate drainage have led to the deterioration of the building's structural integrity.

Purpose and Need

The Badger Pass Ski Lodge is a National Park Service-owned facility that is operated by a park concessioner to provide commercial visitor services. The purpose of this project is to meet the policy goals stated in NPS management policies by correcting structural and design deficiencies that are contributing to the deterioration of the Badger Pass Ski Lodge and/or are affecting visitor services, and to support the park management goals for Badger Pass, as identified in the Yosemite *General Management Plan*, by maintaining opportunities for family-oriented downhill skiing and other forms of winter recreation at Badger Pass. This rehabilitation project would repair and stabilize deteriorated structural and exterior elements to prevent further damage, and contribute to full rehabilitation of the ski lodge and associated support facilities.

Badger Pass Ski Lodge is suffering from structural degradation and design deficiencies, and is in need of repairs to ensure that the facility can support winter recreation for generations to come. In addition, the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and safety systems need to be upgraded to meet current codes. The current layout of facilities contributes to congestion and other inefficiencies. Employee facilities are insufficient. Finally, some past additions to the ski lodge are incompatible with the historic character of the ski area, and temporary structures detract from the cultural landscape of the Badger Pass Ski Area historic site and the Glacier Point Road Historic District.

Relationship to Other Plans

The Badger Pass Ski Lodge Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment is an implementation plan tiered from the *General Management Plan*. The goals for the Badger Pass area described in the *General Management Plan* all relate to visitor use: to provide opportunities for family-oriented downhill skiing and other forms of winter recreation with existing facilities and capacities, to

alleviate congestion and overflow parking during winter, to promote increased summer use of the area, and to interpret activities and resources along Glacier Point Road.

Overview of the Alternatives

The Badger Pass Ski Lodge Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment presents and analyzes four alternatives. The No Action Alternative represents continuing the existing operation and maintenance of the Badger Pass Ski Lodge. The three action alternatives represent a reasonable range of options to satisfy the purpose of and need for the project, while also meeting all relevant legal requirements. Each of the action alternatives aims to achieve the goals of this project, but varies in how to rehabilitate the Badger Pass Ski Lodge. An overview of each alternative, along with a list of Actions Common to All Action Alternatives is presented in Table ES-1.

The National Park Service has identified Alternative 3: Rehabilitation and Improvements, as the preferred alternative. This alternative succeeds in protecting sensitive natural and cultural resources, and enhancing the visitor experience.

Environmental Analysis

Chapter 3 of this document presents the Affected Environment and the Environmental Consequences for the Badger Pass Ski Lodge Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment, which fulfills the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Affected Environment section under each resource topic discussed in Chapter 3 describes the existing conditions of the resource in the area affected by the project. The Environmental Consequences section under each resource topic discussed in Chapter 3 analyzes the environmental effects associated with each of the alternatives described in Chapter 2. Table 2-5 in Chapter 2 presents a summary comparison of the Environmental Consequences for each alternative.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA and the National Park Service NEPA guidelines require that “the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable” be identified (CEQ Regulations, Section 1505.2).

Environmentally preferable is defined as “the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA’s Section 101. Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources” (CEQ 1981).

Section 101 of NEPA states that:

It is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to . . . (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment

which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Upon full consideration of the elements of Section 101 of NEPA, Alternative 3 represents the environmentally preferable alternative for the Badger Pass Ski Lodge Rehabilitation Project. This conclusion is analyzed in detail in Chapter 2.

Consultation and Coordination Process

Public scoping was initiated for the Badger Pass Ski Lodge Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment on January 14, 2009, and the National Park Service accepted scoping comments through February 13, 2009. During the scoping period, the park received 44 individual letters from 40 individuals and 4 organizations. The analysis of these letters identified almost 200 discrete comments, from which 78 general concern statements were generated. The Public Scoping Comment and Response Report prepared for the Badger Pass Ski Lodge Rehabilitation Project, as well as copies of the original comments, can be reviewed online at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/badgerlodge.htm>.

Internal scoping and consultation with other government agencies and American Indian governments and organizations informed the planning process.

The public outreach called for in Section 106 of NHPA was integrated with the NEPA process described above, in accordance with the *Programmatic Agreement Among the National Park Service at Yosemite, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Planning, Design, Construction, Operations, and Maintenance, Yosemite National Park, California* (NPS 1999).

Table ES-1
Summary of Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action	Actions Common To All Action Alternatives	Alternative 2: Essential Repairs and Upgrades	Alternative 3: Rehabilitation and Improvements	Alternative 4: Emphasize Historic Character
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency repairs and routine maintenance would continue to take place as needed, but no comprehensive, long-term rehabilitation, restoration, or renovation would occur. Underlying causes of structural damage to the Badger Pass Ski Lodge due to water intrusion, exposure to the elements, and aging infrastructure, would not be addressed. All current program functions at the ski lodge would be maintained (e.g., ski school, the Pups and daycare programs, food service, etc.) The historic elements of the Badger Pass Ski Lodge that are still intact would be retained. However, elements that have been lost would not be restored. The structure would not be treated as recommended, and without stabilization measures, would likely deteriorate further and further lose integrity. Circulation would continue to be crowded and inconvenient at peak times, and path of travel between some visitor services would remain unclear and not ADA-accessible. The building's architectural character would be retained, but vantages where the historic character has been lost would not be addressed. The character of the original ski lodge structure would continue to be masked by later additions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original 1935 ski lodge building would be retained and structural strengthening would take place throughout the facility. All current program functions at the ski lodge would be maintained (e.g., ski school, the Pups and daycare programs, food service, etc.), although some program elements would be relocated under various alternatives. The temporary buildings housing Nordic and Alpine rental and repair would be removed and replaced with permanent structures of similar size and location as the temporary buildings. The new structures would incorporate an architectural vocabulary compatible with the historic character of the site. Fire, life safety, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, roofing, decks, and drainage systems would be upgraded or replaced as necessary. Accessibility would be improved by the addition of an elevator, ramps, floor leveling for improved path of travel, new stairs, and new accessible restrooms on each floor. Engineering and related site improvements would be implemented. Advances in energy efficiency would be implemented wherever new systems are installed to support park sustainability goals. Construction activities would be confined to previously disturbed areas. NPS Interpretation and Wilderness Permitting functions would be relocated from the Ranger Station to the west building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badger Pass Ski Lodge would be rehabilitated within the current building envelope, involving minimal action to fulfill the basic project needs for repair and code upgrades. Rehabilitation would halt continued deterioration and establish basic protective measures where repair or upgrade work is conducted. Features that contribute to the historic character of the site and existing spatial relationships would be maintained and protected. Ski lodge construction that does not contribute to the historic character of the site would also remain. The current visitor arrival and circulation organization through the ski lodge would be retained. Improvements would be made to provide accessible paths of travel to program uses at three floors. Program functions would remain almost entirely in their current locations. The building's architectural character would be retained, but vantages where the historic character has been lost would not be addressed. The character of the original ski lodge structure would continue to be masked by later additions. Implementation would require two seasons of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badger Pass Ski Lodge would be rehabilitated to address needs for repair, code upgrades and historic integrity, operational and visitor service improvements. The existing building footprint would be maintained with some alteration. A portion of construction dating from after the historic period of significance of the site would be removed, and some additions would be added to existing buildings. The current Winter Club Room and breezeway connection would be removed, and modifications and additions would be made to the west building and main lodge. Exterior plazas and decks would be slightly modified. Road side plazas and paving would be modified. Existing features that contribute to the historic character of the site would be maintained, strengthened, and made a focus. The main lodge would be freed from adjoining construction. The historic lounge with fireplace, open to the second floor, would be restored. Some program elements would be relocated, and visitor circulation would be improved. The sense of arrival to the ski lodge would be improved, and significant spatial relationships and site view corridors would be enhanced. Implementation would require four seasons of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original 1935 ski lodge building would be restored to prominence and the non-historic buildings would be replaced with new facilities. The second floor deck and south dining room extension (window wall) at the main lodge would be removed, and the south façade of the main lodge would be restored. New construction would be added both east and west of the main lodge. The current Winter Club Room and breezeway connection would be removed, the west building would be replaced, and modifications would be made to the main lodge. Exterior plazas and decks, and road side plazas and paving would be modified. The west building would incorporate a new elevator. The main lodge would be freed from adjoining construction and all façades restored close to their condition during the period of significance of the site. The historic lounge with fireplace, open to the second floor, would be restored. Program elements and circulation would be reconfigured greatly to improve visitor service and circulation. The sense of arrival to the ski lodge would be improved, and significant spatial relationships and site view corridors would be enhanced. Implementation would require five seasons of work.