

# Chapter 6: Glossary and Acronyms

## Glossary of Terms

**Affected environment:** Existing natural, cultural, and social conditions of an area that are subject to change, both directly and indirectly, as a result of a proposed human action.

**Alpine (skiing):** Downhill skiing.

**Alternatives:** Sets of management elements that represent a range of options for how, or whether to proceed with a proposed project. An environmental assessment analyzes the potential environmental and social impacts of the range of alternatives presented, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

**Archeological resources:** Historic and prehistoric deposits, sites, features, structure ruins, and anything of a cultural nature found within, or removed from, an archeological site.

**Area of potential effect:** The geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if such properties exist. The area of potential effect is influenced by the scale and nature of the undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking.

**Best management practices:** Effective, feasible (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) conservation practices and land- and water-management measures that avoid or minimize adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources. Best management practices may include schedules for activities, prohibitions, maintenance guidelines, and other management practices.

**CEQ Regulations:** The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) was established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and given the responsibility for developing federal environmental policy and overseeing the implementation of NEPA by federal agencies.

**Clerestory:** An upper portion of a wall containing windows for supplying natural light to a building.

**Cultural landscape:** “A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.” There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: *historic sites*, *historic designed landscapes*, *historic vernacular landscapes*, and *ethnographic landscapes*. (Preservation Brief 36)

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory:** The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a database containing information on the historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape’s location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management.

**Cultural Landscape Report:** A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is the primary report that documents the history, significance and treatment of a cultural landscape. A Cultural Landscape

Report evaluates the history and integrity of the landscape including any changes to its geographical context, features, materials, and use. Cultural Landscape Reports are often prepared with a change to a landscape is proposed. In such instances, a Cultural Landscape Report can be a useful tool to protect the landscape's character-defining features from undue wear, alteration or loss, and can provide managers, curators, and others with information needed to make management decisions. (Preservation Brief 36)

**Decibel:** A unit of measure of sound intensity.

**Ecosystem:** An ecosystem can be defined as a geographically identifiable area that encompasses unique physical and biological characteristics. It is the sum of the plant community, animal community, and environment in a particular region or habitat.

**Palustrine emergent wetland:** A wetland characterized by frequent or continual inundation dominated by herbaceous species of plants typically rooted underwater and emerging into air (e.g., cattails, rushes), excluding mosses and lichens. This vegetation is present for most of the growing season in most years. Perennial plants usually dominate these wetlands. All water regimes are included, except sub-tidal and irregularly exposed.

**Palustrine scrub-shrub wetland:** A wetland area dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 meters (20 feet) tall. The species include true shrubs, young trees, and trees or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions. All water regimes except subtidal are included.

**Environmental assessment:** A public document required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that identifies and analyzes activities that might affect the human and natural environment. An environmental assessment is a concise public document which provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), aids an agency's compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary, and it facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.

**Environmental consequences:** This section of an environmental assessment describes the impacts a proposed action will have on resources. Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, both beneficial and adverse, are analyzed. The context, duration, and intensity of impacts are defined and quantified as much as possible.

**Environmentally preferable alternative:** The environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative within the range of alternatives presented in an environmental assessment that best promotes the goals of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In general, this is the alternative causes the least damage to the environment and best protects natural and cultural resources. In practice, one alternative may be more preferable for some environmental resources while another alternative may be preferable for other resources.

**Facilities:** Buildings and the associated supporting infrastructure such as roads, trails, and utilities.

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):** The public document describing the decision made on selecting the "preferred alternative" in an environmental assessment. See "environmental assessment."

**Floodplain:** A nearly level alluvial plain that borders a river or stream and is subject to flooding unless protected artificially.

**Historic building:** For the purposes of the National Register of Historic Places, a building can be a house, barn, church, hotel, or similar construction, created principally to shelter human activity. “Building” may also refer to a historically and functionally related unit, such as a courthouse and jail or a house and barn.

**Historic district:** A historic district is an area which possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. To be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity. It must be important for historical, architectural, archeological, engineering, or cultural values.

**Historic property:** A historic property is any prehistoric or historic building, site, district, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. Types of historic properties can include archeological sites, historic cultural landscapes, and traditional cultural properties (listed as sites, buildings, or districts).

**Historic site:** A historic site is the location of significant event which can be prehistoric or historic in nature. It can represent activities or buildings (standing, ruined, or vanished). It is the location itself which is of historical interest in a historic site, and it possesses cultural or archeological value regardless of the value of any structures that currently exist on the location. Examples of sites include shipwrecks, battlefields, campsites, natural features, and rock shelters.

**Historic structure:** For the purposes of the National Register of Historic Places, the term “structure” is used to distinguish from buildings those functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter. Examples of structures include bridges, gazebos, and highways.

**Historic Structure Report:** “A Historic Structure Report (HSR) is prepared whenever there is to be a major intervention into historic structures or where activities are programmed that affect the qualities and characteristics that make the properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The report consists of the collection, presentation, and evaluation of anthropological/archeological, historical, and architectural/engineering research findings on a historic or prehistoric structure, and their setting, and makes recommendations for treatment consistent with their significance, integrity, condition, and programmed use. It analyzes and records all periods of construction (not just “significant” periods), modifications, source materials, building techniques, other evidence of use, and setting. (DO-28)”

**Implementation plan:** Implementation plans, which tier off of programmatic plans (like the *General Management Plan*) and focus on how to implement an activity or project needed to achieve a long-term goal. Implementation plans may direct specific projects as well as ongoing management activities or programs. They provide a more extensive level of detail and analysis than do general management plans. Implementation plans are required to undergo NEPA review.

**Mitigation:** Activity that will avoid, reduce the severity of, or eliminate an adverse environmental impact.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** The federal act that requires the development of an Environmental Impact Statement for federal actions that might have substantial environmental, social, or other impacts.

**National Park Service Management Policies:** A policy is a guiding principle or procedure that sets the framework and provides direction for management decisions. NPS policies are guided by and consistent with the Constitution, public laws, Executive proclamations and orders, and regulations and directives from higher authorities. Policies translate these sources of guidance into cohesive directions. Policy direction may be general or specific. It may prescribe the process by which decisions are made, how an action is to be accomplished, or the results are to be achieved. The primary source of NPS policy is the publication *Management Policies 2006*. The policies contained therein are applicable Service-wide. They reflect National Park Service management philosophy. Director's Orders supplement and may amend *Management Policies*. Unwritten or informal “policy” and people’s various understandings of National Park Service traditional practices are never relied on as official policy.

**Natural processes:** All processes such as hydrologic, geologic and ecosystemic, that are not the result of human manipulation.

**No Action Alternative:** The alternative in a plan that proposes to continue current management direction. “No action” means the proposed activity would not take place, and the environmental effects resulting from taking no action would be compared with the effects of permitting the proposed activity or an alternative activity to go forward.

**Nonattainment Area:** A geographical area identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and/or the California Air Resources Board as not meeting national and/or California ambient air quality standards (NAAQS / CAAQS) for a given pollutant.

**Non-native species:** Species of plants or wildlife that are not native to a particular area and often interfere with natural biological systems.

**Nordic (skiing):** Cross-country skiing.

**Organic Act:** In 1916, the National Park Service Organic Act established the National Park Service in order to “promote and regulate use of parks . . .” and defined the purpose of the national parks as “to conserve the scenery and natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” This law provides overall guidance for the management of Yosemite National Park.

**Planning:** An interdisciplinary process for developing short-term and long-term goals for visitor experience, resource conditions, and facility placement.

**Preferred alternative:** The preferred alternative is the alternative within the range of alternatives presented in an environmental assessment that the agency believes would best fulfill the purpose and need of the proposed action. While the preferred alternative is a different concept from the environmentally preferable alternative, they may also be one and the same for some environmental assessments.

**Programmatic plan:** Programmatic plans establish broad management direction for Yosemite National Park. The 1980 *General Management Plan* is a programmatic plan with a purpose to set a “clearly defined direction for resource preservation and visitor use” and provide general directions and policies to guide planning and management in the park. Programmatic plans are required to undergo NEPA review.

**Public comment process:** The public comment process is a formalized process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in which the National Park Service must publish a Notice Of Availability in the *Federal Register* which provides public notice that a draft environmental assessment and associated information, including scoping comments and supporting documentation, is available for public review and input pursuant to the Freedom Of Information Act.

**Rehabilitation:** The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values.

**Riparian area:** The land area and associated vegetation bordering a stream or river.

**Riverine:** Of or relating to a river. A riverine system includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel, with two exceptions: (1) wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens, and (2) habitats with water containing ocean-derived salts in excess of 0.5%. A channel is an open conduit either naturally or artificially created which periodically or continuously contains moving water, or which forms a connecting link between two bodies of standing water.

**Special status species:** Species of plants or wildlife that receive special protection under state and/or federal laws (also referred to as “listed species” or “endangered species”), and state, local, and park sensitive species that may not be protected by law.

**Traditional cultural resource:** Any site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional, legendary, religious, subsistence, or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it.

**Traditional cultural property:** Traditional cultural resource that is eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic property

**Treatment:** Work carried out to achieve a historic preservation goal. The four primary treatments are *preservation*, *rehabilitation*, *restoration*, and *reconstruction* (as stated in the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*).

**Visitor experience:** The perceptions, feelings, and reactions a park visitor has in relationship with the surrounding environment.

**Visitor use:** Refers to the types of recreation activities visitors participate in, numbers of people in an area, their behavior, the timing of use, and distribution of use within a given area.

**Wetland:** Wetlands are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CFR, Section 328.3[b], 1986) as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands are defined by the USFWS as transitional lands between terrestrial and aquatic systems, where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water.

## Acronyms

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>ACHP</b>     | Advisory Council on Historic Preservation                       |
| <b>ADA</b>      | The Americans with Disabilities Act                             |
| <b>AIRFA</b>    | American Indian Religious Freedom Act                           |
| <b>ARPA</b>     | Archaeological Resources Protection Act                         |
| <b>CARB</b>     | California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board |
| <b>CCC</b>      | Civilian Conservation Corps                                     |
| <b>CDFG</b>     | California Department of Fish and Game                          |
| <b>CDN</b>      | Communications Data Network                                     |
| <b>CEQ</b>      | Council on Environmental Quality                                |
| <b>CFR</b>      | Code of Federal Regulations                                     |
| <b>CIF</b>      | Capital Improvement Fund  |
| <b>CIP</b>      | Comprehensive Interpretive Planning                             |
| <b>DCS</b>      | Distributed control subsystem                                   |
| <b>dB</b>       | Decibel   |
| <b>dba</b>      | Decibel (on the “A-weighted” scale)                             |
| <b>DNC</b>      | Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.    |
| <b>DO</b>       | Director’s Order  |
| <b>EA</b>       | Environmental assessment  |
| <b>EIS</b>      | Environmental impact statement                                  |
| <b>EPA</b>      | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency                            |
| <b>FEIS</b>     | Final environmental impact statement                            |
| <b>FONSI</b>    | Finding of No Significant Impact                                |
| <b>GIS</b>      | Geographic information system(s)                                |
| <b>LAN</b>      | Local area network  |
| <b>LEED</b>     | Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design                   |
| <b>LRIP</b>     | Long-Range Interpretive Plan                                    |
| <b>NAGPRA</b>   | Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act          |
| <b>NEPA</b>     | National Environmental Policy Act                               |
| <b>NHPA</b>     | National Historic Preservation Act                              |
| <b>NPS</b>      | National Park Service   |
| <b>NRCS</b>     | National Resources Conservation Service                         |
| <b>NRHP</b>     | National Register of Historic Places                            |
| <b>NPS</b>      | National Park Service   |
| <b>NWI</b>      | National Wetlands Inventory                                     |
| <b>PCB</b>      | Polychlorinated biphenyl  |
| <b>PEPC</b>     | Planning, Environment, and Public Comment                       |
| <b>PG&amp;E</b> | Pacific Gas and Electric  |
| <b>PM</b>       | Particulate matter  |
| <b>RWQCB</b>    | Regional Water Quality Control Board                            |
| <b>SEIS</b>     | Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement                     |
| <b>SHPO</b>     | State Historic Preservation Officer                             |
| <b>SNEP</b>     | Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project                                 |
| <b>UFAS</b>     | Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards                         |
| <b>USACE</b>    | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers                                    |
| <b>USFWS</b>    | United States Fish and Wildlife Service                         |
| <b>VOC</b>      | Volatile organic compound                                       |
| <b>YTS</b>      | Yosemite Transit System   |
| <b>YCC</b>      | Youth Conservation Corps  |