

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

Memorandum

To: Bernadette Barthelenghi

From: Acting Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2008-107 Big Oak Flat Road Half Dome View

Rehabilitation (24703)

The Management Team has reviewed the proposed project/action and completed its environmental assessment documentation, and we have determined that there:

- Will not be any effect on threatened, endangered, or rare species and/or their critical habitat.
- Will not be any effect on historical, cultural, or archeological resources.
- Will not be serious or long-term undesirable environmental or visual effects.

The subject proposed project, therefore, is now cleared for all NEPA and NHPA compliance requirements as presented above. Project plans and specifications are approved and construction and/or project implementation can commence.

For the proposed project actions to be within compliance requirements during construction and/or project implementation, the following mitigations must be adhered to:

- Interpretive and education materials, displays, exhibits will be developed in consultation with the associated American Indian tribes. Allow a minimum of 90 days for consultation.
- Equipment used in construction must be inspected before entering park to prevent weed spread.
 Any fill material brought into the park as part of this project need to be from RMS approved and inspected sources. Project site must have NPS staff weeding before construction, RMS monitor during construction post construction monitoring for exotic plants. Staging areas should be on areas already impacted. If new areas are disturbed, plants and top soils should be salvaged.

//James F. Hammett// (Acting)

David V. Uberuaga

Enclosure (with attachments)

cc: Statutory Compliance File

The signed original of this document is on file at the Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in Yosemite National Park.



Yosemite NP Date: 04/29/2009

Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2008-107 Big Oak Flat Road Half Dome View Rehabilitation

PIN: 24703 **Date**: May 18, 2010

Project Description:

Currently the Half Dome View consists of a paved oblong shaped parking area separated from Big Oak Flat Road by half round concrete barriers and connected by two entrances. There are no marked parking spaces, resulting in haphazard vehicle parking. There are no defined walkways and visitors walk around parked vehicles to get to the viewing area and take photos while standing on the paved parking area. The one wayside exhibit interprets forest fire but does not orient the visitor to Yosemite Valley. Soil erosion and user created walkways along the edges of the pavement, around the viewpoint, and down the slopes have caused soil erosion and vegetation trampling.

The purpose of the Half Dome Overlook Project is to improve resource protection and the recreation visitor experience. This project will remedy vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to pedestrian safety issues, correct soil erosion and drainage deficiencies, provide clear circulation patterns for pedestrians and vehicles, enhance viewing opportunities for visitors, and provide accessibility to the viewing platform. The plan maintains the naturalistic, rustic, historic site integrity found along Big Oak Flat Road, which has also incorporated mitigation measures provided by the park's Historic Landscape Architect during the conceptual review of the alternatives and value analysis phases of the project. Project includes a clearer site boundary with walkways, granite curbing, and seat wall that will be provided with resulting enhanced protection of the natural resources. The design will provide accessibility to the viewing platform for visitors with disabilities.

Project includes:

- Provide separated pedestrian viewing photo area with hardened surface and defined edges.
- Provide and outdoor recreation site that is accessible to visitors with disabilities.
- Provide improved vehicular circulation and safety. Provide improved pedestrian circulation and safety.
- Provide visitor orientation as for many this may be the first stop in Yosemite National Park.
- Provide informal visitor seating.
- Provide direct views that maximize the views into Yosemite Valley and the Merced River Canyon.
- Provide Best Management Practices for soil erosion prevention on all unplanned and user created trails.

One concept and three alternatives were reviewed by the NPS core team. A Value Analysis (VA) workshop was held, which resulted in a preferred alternative and was approved with minor changes by the park Management Team on 2/11/09. Review meetings and the VA workshop were attended by representatives from all divisions in the park.

Project Locations: Mariposa County, CA

Mitigations:

- Interpretive and education materials, displays, and exhibits will be developed in consultation with the associated American Indian tribes. A minimum of 90 days for consultation is required.
- Equipment used in construction must be inspected before entering the park to prevent weed spread. Any fill material brought into the park as part of this project needs to be from sources that are RMS approved and inspected. The project site must have NPS staff weed before construction. A RMS monitor is required during construction and a post construction monitor is required for exotic plants. Staging areas should be on already impacted areas. If new areas are disturbed, plants and top soils should be salvaged.

Describe the category used to exclude action from further NEPA analysis and indicate the number of the category (see Section 3-4 of DO-12):

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.

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No exceptional circumstances (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

//James F. Hammett// (Acting)
Acting Park Superintendent

6/08/09

Date

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Yosemite NP Date: 04/29/2009

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF) DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Updated May 2007 - per 2004 DM revisions and proposed DO-12 changes

Today's Date: May 27, 2009 Date Form Initiated: 05/27/2009

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: Yosemite NP

Project Title: 2008-107 Big Oak Flat Road Half Dome View Rehabilitation

PEPC Project Number: 24703

Project Type: Facility Rehabilitation (FR)

Project Location: County, State: Mariposa County, California

Project Leader: Bernadette Barthelenghi

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Currently the Half Dome View consists of a paved oblong shaped parking area separated from Big Oak Flat Road by half round concrete barriers and connected by two entrances. There are no marked parking spaces, resulting in haphazard vehicle parking. There are no defined walkways and visitors walk around parked vehicles to get to the viewing area and take photos while standing on the paved parking area. The one wayside exhibit interprets forest fire but does not orient the visitor to Yosemite Valley. Soil erosion and user created walkways along the edges of the pavement, around the viewpoint, and down the slopes have caused soil erosion and vegetation trampling.

The purpose of the Half Dome Overlook Project is to improve resource protection and the recreation visitor experience. This project will remedy vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to pedestrian safety issues, correct soil erosion and drainage deficiencies, provide clear circulation patterns for pedestrians and vehicles, enhance viewing opportunities for visitors, and provide accessibility to the viewing platform. The plan maintains the naturalistic, rustic, historic site integrity found along Big Oak Flat Road, which has also incorporated mitigation measures provided by the park's Historic Landscape Architect during the conceptual review of the alternatives and value analysis phases of the project. Project includes a clearer site boundary with walkways, granite curbing, and seat wall that will be provided with resulting enhanced protection of the natural resources. The design will provide accessibility to the viewing platform for visitors with disabilities.

Project includes:

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- Provide visitor orientation as for many this may be the first stop in Yosemite National Park.
- Provide informal visitor seating.
- Provide direct views that maximize the views into Yosemite Valley and the Merced River Canyon.
- Provide Best Management Practices for soil erosion prevention on all unplanned and user created trails.

One concept and three alternatives were reviewed by the NPS core team. A Value Analysis (VA) workshop was held, which resulted in a preferred alternative and was approved with minor changes by the park Management Team on 2/11/09. Review meetings and the VA workshop were attended by representatives from all divisions in the park.

Preliminary drawings attached? Yes

Is project a hot topic (controversial or sensitive issues that should be brought to attention of Regional Director)? $\bf {No}$

C. RESOURCE EFFECTS TO CONSIDER:

Identify potential effects to the following physical, natural,	No Effect	Negligible Effects	Minor Effects	Exceeds Minor Effects	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
or cultural resources					
1. Geologic resources – soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc.		X			Project entails rehabilitation work in the entire Half Dome View area with a disturbance of 1-2' deep.
2. From geohazards	X				
3. Air quality		X			Temporary air emissions will occur during project.
4. Soundscapes		X			Construction noises will be temporary in nature during the project.
5. Water quality or quantity	X				
6. Streamflow 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	X				Yosemite National Park is a World Heritage site; no

Heritage Sites			historic properties would
2			be adversely affected by
			implementing this project.
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	See Comment 1, below.
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	X		
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	X		This project protects the park's resources and the recreational visitors' experience.
18. Archeological resources	X		
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	X		
20. Cultural landscapes		X	Big Oak Flat Road Historic District.
21. Ethnographic resources	X		
22. Museum collections (objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections)	X		
23. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation, income changes, tax base, infrastructure	X		
24. Minority and low income populations, ethnography, size, migration patterns, etc.	X		
25. Energy resources	X		
26. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies	X		
27. Resource, including energy, conservation potential, sustainability	X		
28. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.	X		
29. Long-term management of resources or land/resource	X		

productivity			
30. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?	X		

Comments:

1. Equipment used in construction must be inspected before entering the park to prevent weed spread. Any fill material brought into the park as part of this project needs to be from RMS approved and inspected sources. Project site must have NPS staff weeding before construction, RMS monitor during construction and post construction monitoring for exotic plants. Staging areas should be on areas already impacted. If new areas are disturbed, plants and top soils should be salvaged.

D. MANDATORY CRITERIA

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?		X		
B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant		X		
or critical areas? C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?		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. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		X		
G. Have significant impacts on properties		X		

listed or eligible for listing on the		
National Register of Historic Places, as		
determined by either the bureau or		
office?		
H. Have significant impacts on species	X	
listed or proposed to be listed on the List		
of Endangered or Threatened Species, or		
have significant impacts on designated		
Critical Habitat for these species?		
I. Violate a federal law, or a state, local,	X	
or tribal law or requirement imposed for		
the protection of the environment?		
J. Have a disproportionately high and	X	
adverse effect on low income or minority		
populations (Executive Order 12898)?		
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of	X	
Indian sacred sites on federal lands by		
Indian religious practitioners or		
significantly adversely affect the physical		
integrity of such sacred sites (Executive		
Order 13007)?		
L. Contribute to the introduction,	X	See Comment 1, above.
continued existence, or spread of noxious		
weeds or non-native invasive species		
known to occur in the area or actions that		
may promote the introduction, growth, or		
expansion of the range of such species		
(Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and		
Executive Order 13112)?		

For the purpose of interpreting these procedures within the NPS, any action that has the potential to violate the NPS Organic Act by impairing park resources or values would constitute an action that triggers the DOI exception for actions that threaten to violate a federal law for protection of the environment.

E. OTHER INFORMATION

Are personnel preparing this form familiar with the site? Yes

Did personnel conduct a site visit? Yes, all divisions participated in site visits.

Is the project in an approved plan such as a General Management Plan or an Implementation Plan with an accompanying NEPA document? **No**

Are there any interested or affected agencies or parties? No

Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? No

Are there any connected, cumulative, or similar actions as part of the proposed action? (e.g., other development projects in area or identified in GMP, adequate/available utilities to accomplish project)? **No**

F. INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM SIGNATORIES

Interdisciplinary Team	Field of Expertise
David V. Uberuaga	Acting Superintendent
Jim Hammatt	Acting Deputy Superintendent
Linda Dahl	Chief of Planning
Mark Butler	Chief of Project Management
Katariina Tuovinen	Acting Chief of Administration Management
Dennis Mattiuzzi	Chief of Facilities Management
Niki Nicholas	Chief of Resources Management & Science
Marty Nielson	Chief of Business and Revenue Management
Tom Medema	Acting Chief of Interpretation and Education
Steve Shackelton	Chief Ranger
Kinzie Gordon	Project Leader
Mark Butler	Environmental Planning and Compliance
	Program Manager
Jeannette Simons	NHPA Specialist
Renea Kennec	NEPA Specialist

G. SUPERVISORY SIGNATORY

Based on the environmental impact information contained in the statutory compliance file and in this environmental screening form, environmental documentation for this stage of the subject project is complete.

Recommended:

Compliance Specialists	Date
//Renea Kennec// Compliance Specialist – Renea Kennec	6/02/09
//Mark A. Butler// Compliance Program Manager – Mark Butler	6/04/09
//Mark A. Butler// Chief, Project Management – Mark Butler	6/04/09

Approved:

- 1	Acting Superintendent	Date
	//James F. Hammett// (Acting) David V. Uberuaga	6/08/09

The signed original of this document is on file at the Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in Yosemite National Park.



Yosemite NP Date: 05/27/2009

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. Park: Yosemite NP Park District: Big Oak Flat Road

2. Project Description:

a. Project Name: Big Oak Flat Road Half Dome View Rehabilitation Date: May 27, 2009 PEPC

Project ID Number: 24703

b. Describe project and area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.2[c])

Currently the Half Dome View consists of a paved oblong shaped parking area separated from Big Oak Flat Road by half round concrete barriers and connected by two entrances. There are no marked parking spaces, resulting in haphazard vehicle parking. There are no defined walkways and visitors walk around parked vehicles to get to the viewing area and take photos while standing on the paved parking area. The one wayside exhibit interprets forest fire but does not orient the visitor to Yosemite Valley. Soil erosion and user created walkways along the edges of the pavement, around the viewpoint, and down the slopes have caused soil erosion and vegetation trampling.

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3. Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify cultural resources?
No Yes, Source or reference: Big Oak Flat Road Historic District
Check here if no known cultural resources will be affected. (If this is because area has been disturbed, please explain or attach additional information to show the disturbance was so extensive as to preclude intact cultural deposits.)
4. Potentially Affected Resource(s):
Historical structures/resources affected? Name and number(s): Big Oak Flat Road Historic District
Cultural landscapes affected? Name and number(s): Big Oak Flat Road Historic District
5. The proposed action will: (check as many as apply) Yes Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure Replace historic features/elements in kind Yes Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure Yes Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain) Yes Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric) to a historic setting or cultural landscape No Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible No Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible No Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources No Begin or contribute to deterioration of historic features, terrain, setting, landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources No Involve a real property transaction (exchange, sale, or lease of land or structures) Other (please specify)
6. Measures to prevent or minimize loss or impairment of historic/prehistoric properties: (Remember that setting location and use may be relevant.)

- Interpretive and education materials, displays, and exhibits will be developed in consultation with the associated American Indian tribes. A minimum of 90 days for consultation is required.
- 7. Supporting Study Data:

(Attach if feasible; if action is in a plan, EA or EIS, give name and project or page number.)

8. Attachments: [] Maps [] Archeological survey, if applicable [] Drawings [] Specifications [] Photographs [] Scope of Work [] Site plan [] List of Materials [] Samples [] Other:
Prepared by: Jeannette Simons Date: May 27, 2009 Title: Historic Preservation Officer Telephone: 209-379-1372
B. REVIEWS BY CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS
The park 106 coordinator requested review by the park's cultural resource specialist/advisors as indicated by check-off boxes or as follows:
[X] Archeologist Name: Laura Kirn Date: 04/14/2009 Comments: YOSE 1999 PA, stipulation VII.C.2
Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: X No Historic Properties Affected No Adverse Effect Adverse Effect Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: Doc Method: No Potential to Cause Effects [800.3(a) (1)]
[X] Historical Architect Name: Sueann Brown Date: 05/15/2009 Comments: none Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected _X No Adverse Effect Adverse Effect Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: None Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement
[X] Historian Name: Patrick Chapin Date: 05/05/2009 Comments: None Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties AffectedX No Adverse Effect Adverse Effect Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: None

[X] Anthropologist Name: Jeannette Simons Date: 05/27/2009 Comments: American Indian Liaison. The construction APE will not impact traditional cultural resources, but interpretive and educational material will involve American Indian values and resources to which they attach cultural and religious significance.
Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected _X_ No Adverse Effect Adverse Effect Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: Interpretive and education materials, displays, exhibits will be developed in consultation with the associated American Indian tribes. Allow a minimum of 90 days for consultation.
Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement
[X] Historical Landscape Architect Name: David Humphrey Date: 05/04/2009 Comments:
Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties AffectedX No Adverse Effect Adverse Effect Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:
Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement
No Reviews From: Curator, 106 Advisor, Other Advisor
C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Assessment of Effect:
No Historic Properties Affected X No Adverse Effect Adverse Effect
2. Compliance requirements:
[] A. STANDARD 36 CFR PART 800 CONSULTATION Further consultation under 36 CFR Part 800 is needed.

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

[] B. STREAMLINED REVIEW UNDER THE 2008 SERVICEWIDE PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT (PA) The above action meets all conditions for a streamlined review under section III of the 2008 Servicewide PA for Section 106 compliance. APPLICABLE STREAMLINED REVIEW Criteria (Specify 1-16 of the list of streamlined review criteria.) [] C. PLAN-RELATED UNDERTAKING Consultation and review of the proposed undertaking were completed in the context of a plan review process, in accordance with the 2008 Servicewide PA and 36 CFR Part 800. Specify plan/EA/EIS: [\mathbf{X}] D. UNDERTAKING RELATED TO ANOTHER AGREEMENT The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under another document such as a statewide agreement established in accord with 36 CFR 800.7 or counterpart regulations. Specify: _____ [] E. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS SATISFIED BY USE OF NEPA Documentation is required for the preparation of an EA/FONSI or an EIS/ROD has been developed and used so as also to meet the requirements of 36 CFR 800.3 through 800.6 [] F. No Potential to Cause Effects [800.3(a) (1)] [] G. STIPULATIONS/CONDITIONS

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

Recommended by Park Section 106 coordinator:

Signature of Historic Preservation Officer //Jeanette Simons//

Date: 6/04/09

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

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

Signature of Acting Superintendent //James F. Hammett// (Acting)

Date: 6/08/09

The signed original of this document is on file at the Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in Yosemite National Park.

PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: May 27, 2009

PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: <u>Yosemite NP</u> Project Number: <u>24703</u>

Project Type: Facility Rehabilitation (FR)

Project Location: County, State: Mariposa County, California

Project Manager: Bernadette Barthelenghi

Project Title: 2008-107 Big Oak Flat Road Half Dome View Rehabilitation

PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
1.SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST				
2. Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		X		
3. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		X		
4. Park rare plants or vegetation?		X		
5. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		X		
6.NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
7. Entail ground disturbance?	X			Project entails rehabilitation work in the entire overlook area with a disturbance of 1-2' deep.
8. Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?		X		
9. Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?		X		
10. Has a National Register form been completed?				
11. Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		X		
12.WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				
13. Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor?		X		
14. Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river?		X		
15. Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		X		
16. Remain consistent with its river segment classification?			X	
17. Protect and enhance river ORVs?			X	
18. Fall within the River Protection Overlay?		X		
19. If Yes, remain consistent with conditions of the River Protection Overlay?			X	

20. Remain consistent with the areas Management		X	
Zoning?			
21. Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?	X		
22. Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and	X		
Scenic River corridor?			
23. Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic,	X		
recreational, or fish and wildlife values?			
100.WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST			
101. Within designated Wilderness?	X		
102. Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?	X		

HWY 120 I BIG DAY FLAT ROAD **EXISTING CONDITIONS**







HALF DOME OVERLOOK REHABILITATION



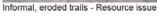
Existing Half Dome View Site



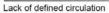




Unstructured Parking









Lack of defined parking



Soil erosion and broken asphalt edge

Project Issues

Site Plan







ALTERNATIVE 4

HALF DOME OVERLOOK REHABILITATION
Yosemite National Park

February, 2009