



IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7615(YOSE-PM)

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

Memorandum

To: Rod Kennec

From: Acting Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2009-024 El Portal Rail Exhibit Site Improvement
2009 (24248)

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:

- No mitigations identified.

//James F. Hammett// (Acting)
David V. Uberuaga

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

Enclosure (with attachments)

cc: Statutory Compliance File



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2009-024 El Portal Rail Exhibit Site Improvement 2009

PIN: 24248

Date: May 19, 2010

Project Description:

This proposed project will continue the advances made in the preservation of the El Portal Rail Exhibit. This proposal will improve the exhibit's accessibility and enhance both interpretive value and visitor satisfaction. Improvements contained in this proposal are:

- Build asphalt curb/berm at the roads edge along the turntable pit to prevent rain water runoff on the road from flowing into the turntable pit.
- Build an accessible viewing area at street level, between the turntable and the locomotive, to mount the two interpretive wayside signs that describe the rail exhibit.
- Build steps out of railroad ties up from the viewing area to the locomotive and caboose displays.
- Extend tracks at both ends of the turntable to accommodate a permanent locking devise to keep the turntable from being turned by unauthorized personnel.
- Realign the end of the track that the caboose sits on to line up with the turntable. This would make it possible to push the caboose on to the turntable and turn the caboose, as well as replace ties under this track.
- Selective replacement of rotted railroad ties under the caboose and in front of the locomotive.

Project Locations:

Mariposa County, CA

Mitigations:

- No mitigations identified.

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 National Park.*



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite NP
Date: 05/20/2009

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)
DO-12 APPENDIX 1

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

Today's Date: **May 26, 2009**

Date Form Initiated: **05/26/2009**

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: **Yosemite NP**

Project Title: **2009-024 El Portal Rail Exhibit Site Improvement 2009**

PEPC Project Number: **24248**

Project Type: **Facility Maintenance (FM)**

Project Location: County, State: **Mariposa, California**

Project Leader: **Rod Kennec**

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This proposed project will continue the advances made in the preservation of the El Portal Rail Exhibit. This proposal will improve the exhibit's accessibility and enhance both interpretive value and visitor satisfaction. Improvements contained in this proposal are:

- Build asphalt curb/berm at the roads edge along the turntable pit to prevent rain water runoff on the road from flowing into the turntable pit.
- Build an accessible viewing area at street level, between the turntable and the locomotive, to mount the two interpretive wayside signs that describe the rail exhibit.
- Build steps out of railroad ties up from the viewing area to the locomotive and caboose displays.
- Extend tracks at both ends of the turntable to accommodate a permanent locking device to keep the turntable from being turned by unauthorized personnel.
- Realign the end of the track that the caboose sits on to line up with the turntable. This would make it possible to push the caboose on to the turntable and turn the caboose, as well as replace ties under this track.
- Selective replacement of rotted railroad ties under the caboose and in front of the locomotive.

Preliminary drawings attached? **Yes**

Is project a hot topic (controversial or sensitive issues that should be brought to attention of Regional Director)? **No**

C. RESOURCE EFFECTS TO CONSIDER:

Identify potential effects to the following physical, natural, or cultural resources	No Effect	Negligible Effects	Minor Effects	Exceeds Minor Effects	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
1. Geologic resources – soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc.		X			The excavating of the viewing area includes removal of soil 30" x 200 square feet.
2. From geohazards	X				
3. Air quality		X			Air emissions include temporary equipment exhaust.
4. Soundscapes		X			Temporary equipment noises during normal business hours.
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 Heritage Sites	X				
13. Unique or important wildlife or wildlife habitat	X				
14. Unique or important fish or fish habitat	X				
15. Introduce or promote non-native species (plant or animal)	X				
16. Recreation resources,	X				

including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.					
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	X				The visitor experience will be enhanced by the rail exhibit site improvement.
18. Archeological resources	X				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure		X			El Portal Rail Exhibit.
20. Cultural landscapes	X				
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 productivity	X				
30. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?	X				

Comments:

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 or critical areas?		X		
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 listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?		X		
H. Have significant impacts on species 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?		X		
I. Violate a federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		X		
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority		X		

populations (Executive Order 12898)?				
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007)?		X		
L. Contribute to the introduction, 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)?		X		

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? **No**

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

<u>Interdisciplinary Team</u>	<u>Field of Expertise</u>
David V. Uberuaga	Acting Superintendent
Jim Hammett	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
Rod Kennec	Project Leader
Mark Butler	Acting Environmental Planning and Compliance
	Program Manager
Jeannette Simons	NHPA Specialist
Renea Kennec	NEPA Specialist

H. 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 Specialist	Date
<u>//Renea Kennec//</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kennec	<u>5/26/09</u>
<u>//Mark A. Butler//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Mark Butler	<u>6/02/09</u>
<u>//Mark A. Butler//</u> Acting Chief, Project Management – Mark Butler	<u>6/02/09</u>

Approved:

Acting Superintendent	Date
<u>//James F. Hammett// (Acting)</u> David V. Uberuaga	<u>6/09/09</u>

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Yosemite National Park.*

PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: **May 26, 2009**

PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: Yosemite NP

Project Number: 24248

Project Type: Facility Maintenance (FM)

Project Location: County, State: Mariposa, California

Project Manager: Rod Kennec

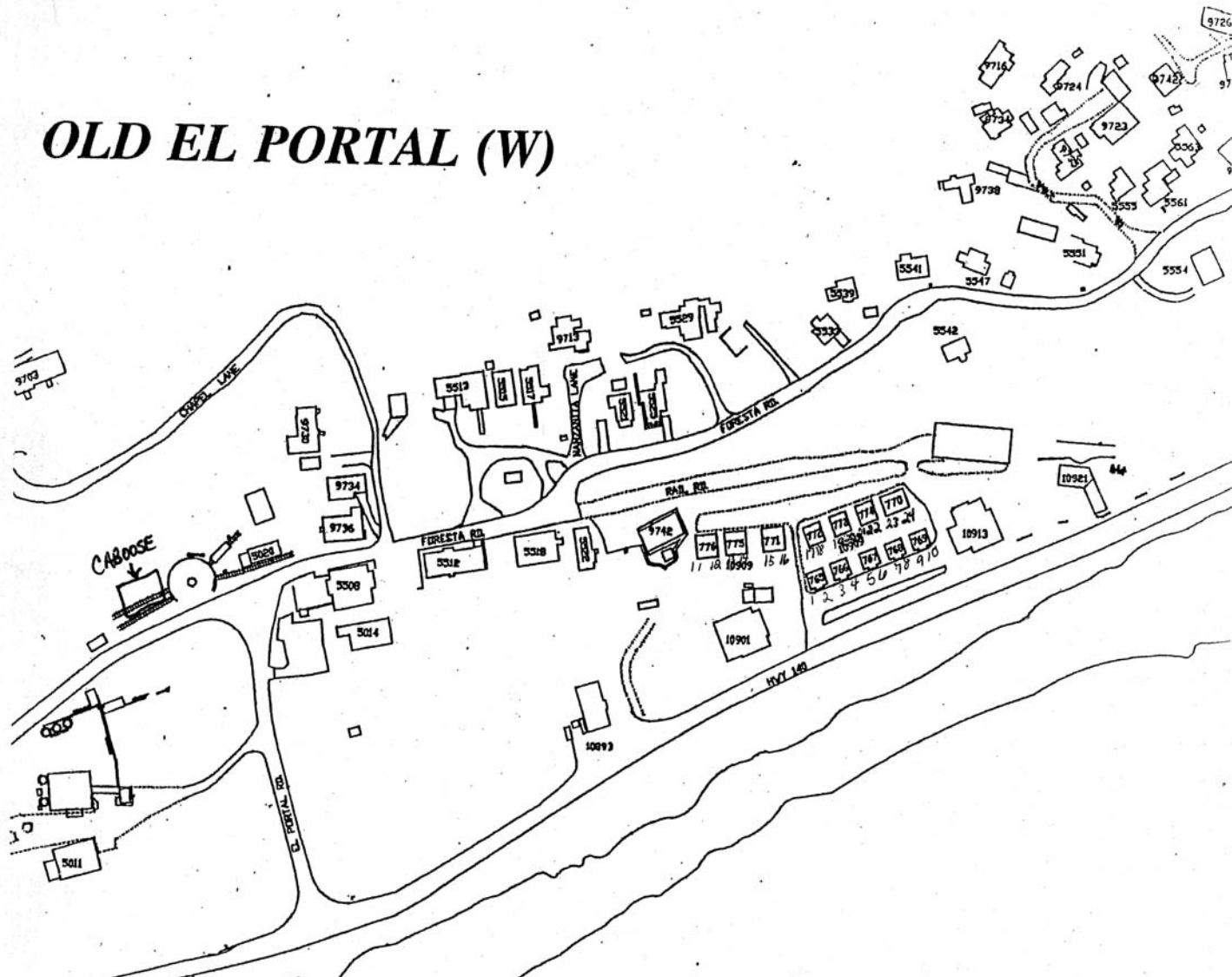
Project Title: 2009-024 El Portal Rail Exhibit Site Improvement 2009

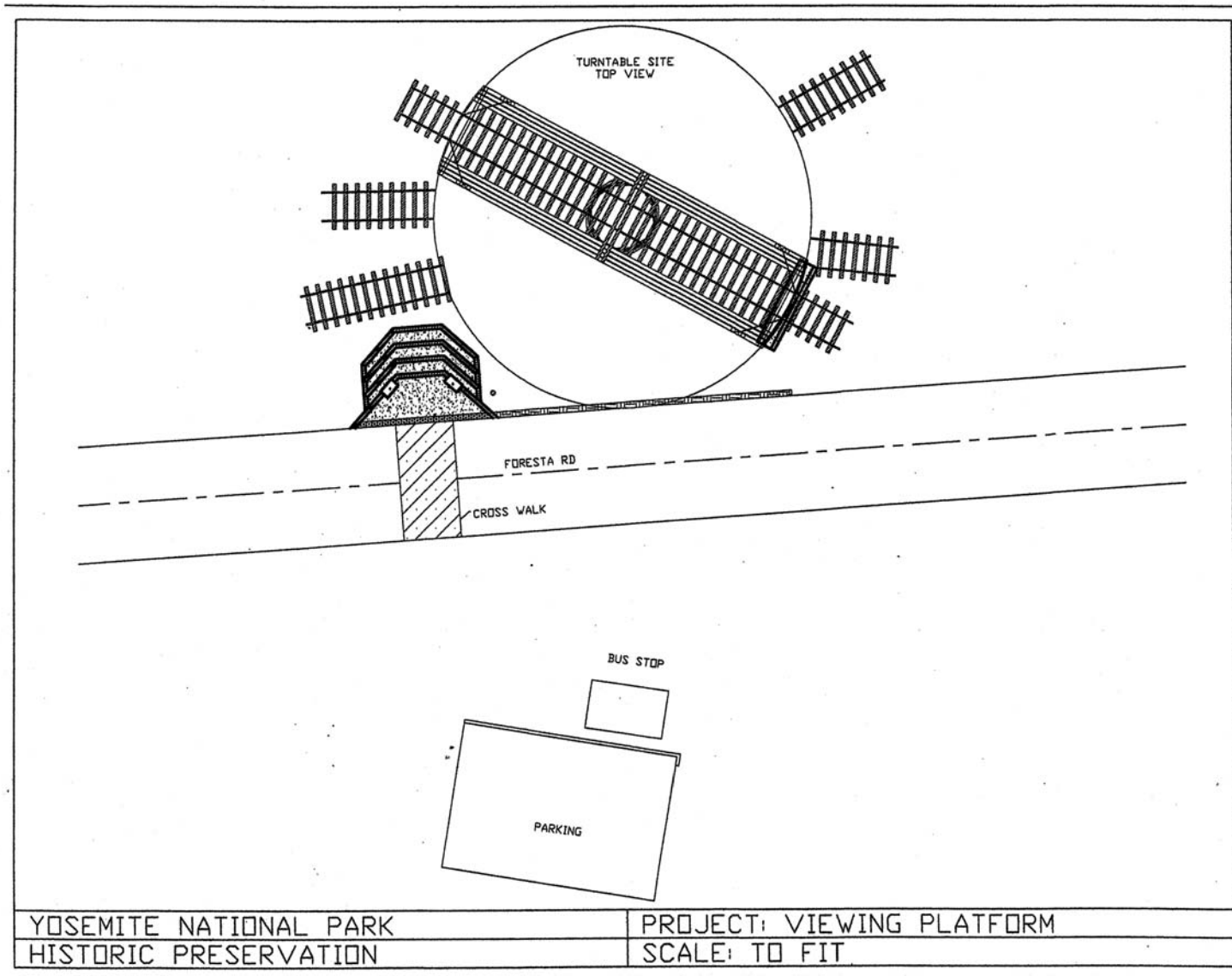
PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

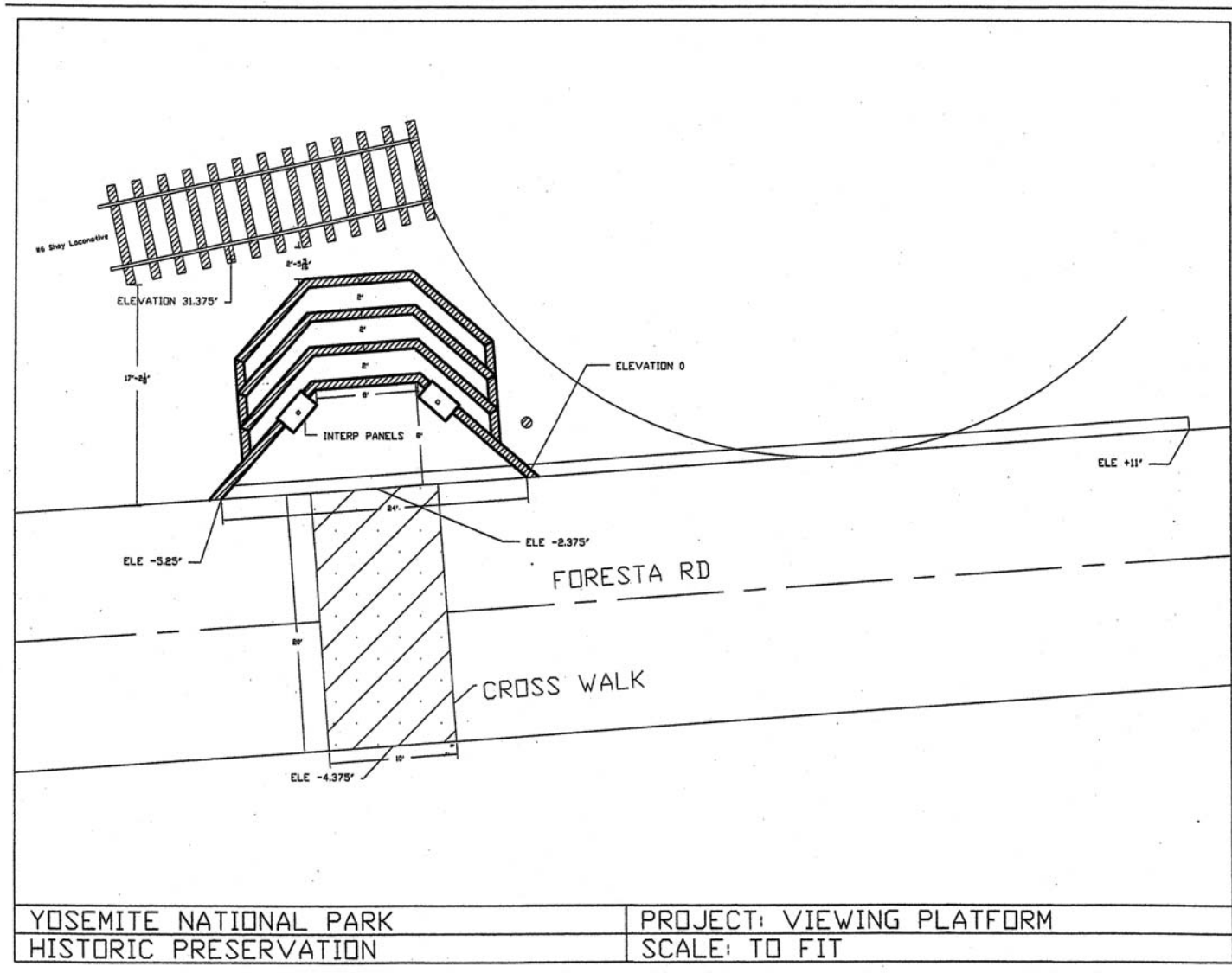
ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
1.SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST				
2. Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		X		
3. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		X		
4. Park rare plants or vegetation?		X		
5. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		X		
6.NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
7. Entail ground disturbance?	X			The excavating of the viewing area includes removal of soil 30" x 200 square feet.
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?			X	
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? (Name the river corridor)	X			Merced River.
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			X	

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

OLD EL PORTAL (W)







Yosemite Valley Railroad Yosemite National Park



All Aboard!

When Yosemite Valley Railroad first rolled through the Merced River Canyon on May 15, 1907, excitement and enthusiasm whistled in the air.

The railroad revolutionized travel by changing the trip from Merced to Yosemite from an uncomfortable two-day, horse-drawn stage ride to a four-hour, sightseeing journey. Those traveling on the train 100 years ago may have shared similar emotions as you when arriving in Yosemite for the first time. Perhaps they felt anticipation, excitement, or even impatience as they were nearing the end of their journey.



The Yosemite Valley Railroad strikes for the National Park....Up its matchless canyon this new trail toils, unfolding moment by moment one of the most picturesque series of mountain pictures that nature has fashioned in her whole wide world.

Lanier Bartlett
Pacific Monthly, 1907

In 2008, the National Park Service, The Yosemite Fund, and local volunteer railfans worked together to reconstruct this turntable on its original foundation.

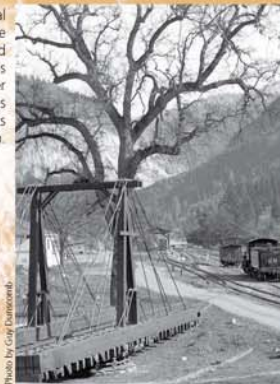


Photo by Greg Davidson



Photo by Al Rose

Caboose 15 from the Yosemite Valley Railroad has been on display in El Portal since 1961. Alongside it sits Engine 6 from the Hetch Hetchy Railroad. The train station to your right, once located in Bagby, now serves as headquarters for The Yosemite Association.



THE YOSEMITE FUND®
Providing for Yosemite's Future

This project was paid for through a grant from the Yosemite Fund.

Yosemite Valley Railroad Yosemite National Park



Gateway to Yosemite

The arrival of the Yosemite Valley Railroad in El Portal, Spanish for *The Gateway*, represented a great accomplishment in transportation and the birth of this community. In 1907, the first El Portal building was the railroad freight and ticket office.

Once rail passengers arrived here, they completed the final 12 miles of their journey into the park via stage and later, motorcoach. In 1916, railroad travel reached its height with over 14,000 fares recorded; however, this very same year, more visitors traveled to Yosemite by automobile than by train. After the All-Year Highway opened in 1926, passenger travel fell almost 80 percent, a trend that eventually ended rail travel to the park.



Photos by Will Whitaker

A Yosemite Valley passenger train crosses the trestle near Sweetwater Creek about 13 miles downstream of El Portal in 1940. The railroad made its last scheduled run in August, 1945 moving it out of service and onto the pages of Yosemite transportation history.



THE YOSEMITE FUND®
Providing for Yosemite's Future

This project was paid for through a grant from the Yosemite Fund.



ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. Park: **Yosemite NP** Park District: **El Portal**

2. Project Description:

a. Project Name: **2009-024 El Portal Rail Exhibit Site Improvement 2009** Date: **May 20, 2009**

PEPC Project ID Number: **24248**

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

This proposed project will continue the advances made in the preservation of the El Portal Rail Exhibit. This proposal will improve the exhibit's accessibility and enhance both interpretive value and visitor satisfaction. Improvements contained in this proposal are:

- Build asphalt curb/berm at the roads edge along the turntable pit to prevent rain water runoff on the road from flowing into the turntable pit.
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- Selective replacement of rotted railroad ties under the caboose and in front of the locomotive.

3. Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify cultural resources?

 No

X Yes, Source or reference: **Old El Portal CLI; El Portal Archeological District; El Portal/Foresta American Indian Traditional Cultural Use area; El Portal Rail Exhibit Site.**

 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): **El Portal Rail Exhibit**

NR status: **1 - Listed in Register and documented**

5. The proposed action will: (check as many as apply)

No Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure

Yes Replace historic features/elements in kind

No Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure

No Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain)

No 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.)

No Assessment of Effect mitigations identified.

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 20, 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)]**

[☒] Historical Architect

Name: **Sueann Brown**

Date: **05/07/2009**

Comments: **none**

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [☐]

Assessment of Effect: ☐ No Historic Properties Affected ☒ No Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect
☐ Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: **None**

Doc Method: **Park Specific Programmatic Agreement**

[☒] Historian

Name: **Patrick Chapin**

Date: **05/06/2009**

Comments: **None**

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [☐]

Assessment of Effect: ☒ No Historic Properties Affected ☐ No Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect
☐ Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: **None**

Doc Method: **No Potential to Cause Effects [800.3(a)(1)]**

[☒] Anthropologist

Name: **Jeannette Simons**

Date: **05/20/2009**

Comments: **American Indian Liaison The project will not impact traditional American Indian cultural resources.**

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [☐]

Assessment of Effect: ☒ No Historic Properties Affected ☐ No Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect
☐ Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

[☒] Historical Landscape Architect

Name: **David Humphrey**

Date: **05/06/2009**

Comments:

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [☐]

Assessment of Effect: ☒ 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)]**

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.

☐ 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: _____

☒ 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 //Jeannette Simons//

Date: 5/28/09

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: 6/11/09

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