



Scoping Comment Report

Environmental Assessment for the Concession Contract Prospectus Kings Canyon Village Services



Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
November-December 2009
Prepared 01/05/2010

INTRODUCTION

Public scoping was initiated for the environmental assessment for the Concession Contract Prospectus for Kings Canyon Village Services on November 18, 2009. The 30-day public comment period ended on December 21, 2009. A press release was distributed to area media outlets, and letters with project information requesting public input were mailed to 83 individuals, agencies and organizations, and to 34 tribes or tribal representatives. In addition, scoping information was emailed to 214 agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals.

Notification of the scoping period was published in the Visalia Times Delta newspaper on November 18, 2009 and in the Kaweah Commonwealth newspaper on November 27, 2009. Information was also posted on the National Parks Travelers and the Three Rivers Wire Topix websites. Additionally, information was posted on the National Park Service (NPS) Sequoia and Kings Canyon website and links were provided to the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website (PEPC). Information on the project and scoping period was also provided at the Three Rivers Town Hall Meeting in December.

Six comment letters were received from individuals. No interest groups, agencies, tribes, or businesses provided comments. All commenters were supportive of concessions facilities at Grant Grove and Cedar Grove, and several suggested alternatives and ideas for improving the facilities and visitor services in the area. Several provided comments related to the preservation and/or restoration of the historic structures and character in the Grant Grove area.

THE COMMENT ANALYSIS PROCESS

Comment analysis is a process used to compile and correlate similar public comments into a format that can be used by decision makers and the interdisciplinary team. Comment analysis assists the team in organizing, clarifying, and addressing technical information pursuant to *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) regulations. It also aids in identifying the topics and issues to be evaluated and considered throughout the planning process.

The process includes five main components:

- developing a coding structure
- employing a comment database for comment management
- reading and coding of public comments
- interpreting and analyzing the comments to identify issues and themes
- preparing a comment summary

A coding structure was developed to help sort comments into logical groups by topics and issues. The coding structure was derived from an analysis of the range of topics discussed during internal NPS scoping, past planning documents, and the comments themselves. The coding structure was designed to capture all comment content rather than to restrict or exclude any ideas.

The NPS PEPC database was used for management of the comments. The database stores the full

text of all correspondence and allows each comment to be coded by topic and issue. Some outputs from the database include tallies of the total number of correspondences and comments received, sorting and reporting of comments by a particular topic or issue, and demographic information regarding the sources of the comments.

Analysis of the public comments involved the assignment of the codes to statements made by the public in their letters, email messages, and written comment forms. All comments were read and analyzed, including those of a technical nature; opinions, feelings, and preferences of one element or one potential alternative over another; and comments of a personal or philosophical nature.

Although the analysis process attempts to capture the full range of public concerns, this content analysis report should be used with caution. Comments from people who chose to respond do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the entire public. Furthermore, this was not a vote-counting process, and the emphasis was on the content of the comment rather than the number of times a comment was received, or whether a commenter supported or opposed the proposed project or alternatives.

Definition of Terms

Primary terms used in the document are defined below.

Correspondence: A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter. It can be in the form of a letter, email, written comment form, note card, open house transcript, or petition.

Comment: A comment is a portion of the text within a correspondence that addresses a single subject. It could include such information as opinions on the use of a potential management tool, to request or provide additional data regarding the existing condition, to provide information on laws and regulations, or provide an opinion debating the adequacy of an analysis.

Code: A grouping centered on a common subject. The codes were developed during the scoping process and are used to track major subjects throughout the EIS process.

Concern: Concerns are subdivisions of codes. Codes can be further separated into several concern statements if necessary to provide a better focus on the content of comments. For the purpose of this scoping report, the entire comment on an issue was included but concern statements were not developed.

All scoping comments were considered to be important as useful guidance and public input to the scoping process, but only substantive comments were analyzed in the Public Scoping Comment Summary Report. At this phase of the project, almost all comments are treated as being substantive. No opinions expressing support or opposition for the proposed project are included in this summary.

PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT SUMMARY

AE14000 Affected Environment: Historic Structures

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 119870 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: My primary concern at Grant Grove is the character and operation of the Meadow Camp housekeeping cabin complex and the "tent city" section of the original Grant Park Lodge complex. These two complexes, both of which consist of small cabin-type structures built mostly in the 1920s and 1930s, deserve serious rethinking. The visitor experiences offered by these facilities, despite their historic character, have been substandard for decades. These cabins represent a distinctive style of early twentieth century national park accommodations, and in an era that is seeking authentic experiences, they offer the opportunity to step back into national park history. But instead of providing such an experience, the current management of these units considers them to be no more than cheap, overflow places to dump visitors during busy spells.

I strongly urge the NPS to write into the new contract requirements that will see these two cabin complexes managed and operated as significant historic experiences. Such an approach would entail returning the buildings' fixtures and furnishings to a more historic character, rebuilding the tents so that they recreate the experience they provided in earlier times, and providing landscaping in the tent city area to replace the original forest that has been almost completely removed by NPS hazard tree activity. It would also be appropriate at tent city to increase the number of tents to come closer to the historic nature of the complex during the 1920s and 1930s and replacing the bathhouse. Positive visitor experiences would result.

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119858 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Any structure currently known to be or which can be shown to be eligible for placement on the Register and which is not already listed, should be listed and must be protected (e.g., the "honeymoon cabin" in GG).

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119857 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Any future concessionaire who might win the next contract should NOT add any new services to the GG area IF such require additional structures OR the replacement of existing structures. Minimal architectural changes would be fine to meet the new concessionaire's needs, BUT they must be in keeping with the provisions set down in the "National Register of Historic Places."

Correspondence Id: 1 Comment Id: 119856 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove and Cedar Grove - The existing structures and other human related features are important to the area. They are part of our history and should be considered and preserved.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119850 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Clear Wormwood, Tent City and all bath cabins except the historic Honeymoon Cabin, which needs restoring.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119853 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Presently the concessioner is using the gas station for storage. This could possibly be used as a much needed room for NPS meetings, family liaison and emergency situations, first aid room, etc.

AL2000 Alternatives: Alternatives Eliminated

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119859 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: The concessioner who wins the contract should not be allowed to do ANY sort of 'development' in Wilsonia.

AL4000 Alternatives: New Alternatives Or Elements

Correspondence Id: 2 Comment Id: 119872 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: I am sorry that they took out the Gas station at Grant Grove. The only nearby place is Home or Squaw Valley. Neither are convenient if one is planning on exploring the many places around the area.

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 119871 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Cedar Grove - Food service. Having observed the operations of the lodge and snack bar at cedar Grove for more than three decades, I have concluded that the snack bar level of service provided at this facility is a failure. The current facility does not provide decent dining opportunities for lodge guests or campers, nor does it do so for the increasing number of day-users driving into Cedar Grove.

Consider raising food service at Cedar Grove Village to a coffee shop level. This would likely entail the construction of a new restaurant building at Cedar Grove Village. Visitors to this area, which contains the defining feature of Kings Canyon National Park, deserve better than a 1970s snack bar to meet their dining needs. No new concessions facilities have been constructed in this area since 1978, but needs have shifted. We need to provide better food service.

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 119869 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Cedar Grove - Build another lodge and/or yurts.

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 119868 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Provide shuttle service from Fresno to Grant Grove & Cedar Grove & Giant Forest.

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 119867 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Rebuild the gas station to provide gas again.

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 119866 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Add a playground for kids.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 119865 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Add a laundry room for guests and staff.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 119864 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Add a recreation room for guests and staff.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 119863 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Expand the restaurant to provide outdoor dining. Add a lounge, with beer & wine, for guests. Add a deli.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 119862 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove suggestions - Replace Wormwood: Rebuild on existing site or move staff housing to Cedar Springs.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 119861 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: From a guest's standpoint, it would be nice if the existing cabins could be replaced with modern cabins with baths, but we assume that's not allowed.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119855 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Cedar Grove - Improve the dining experience.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119854 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Cedar Grove - Build better concession employee housing.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119853 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Presently the concessioner is using the gas station for storage. This could possibly be used as a much needed room for NPS meetings, family liaison and emergency situations, first aid room, etc.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119852 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - The "cabin" experience is a cultural experience for many families. Since the sequoias aren't at risk (as in Giant Forest) in this area and there are no cabins left for rent in the two parks, building new cabins with porches, heat and bathroom would bridge the old to the new with the family experience in the forefront. Could replace Meadow Camp.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119851 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Possibly put in upscale hotel.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119850 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Clear Wormwood, Tent City and all bath cabins except the historic Honeymoon Cabin, which needs restoring.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119849 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove Employee housing - Separate from guest facilities. There were numerous noise complaints. Employee cabins and/or rooms need to be bigger than those at Wuksachi.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119848 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Showers and Laundromat with extended hours for visitors

CR1000 Cultural Resources: Guiding Policies, Regs And Laws

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119858 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Any structure currently known to be or which can be shown to be eligible for placement on the Register and which is not already listed, should be listed and must be protected (e.g., the "honeymoon cabin" in GG).

CR4000 Cultural Resources: Impact Of Proposal And Alternatives

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119858 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Any structure currently known to be or which can be shown to be eligible for placement on the Register and which is not already listed, should be listed and must be protected (e.g., the "honeymoon cabin" in GG).

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119857 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Any future concessionaire who might win the next contract should NOT add any new services to the GG area IF such require additional structures OR the replacement of existing structures. Minimal architectural changes would be fine to meet the new concessionaire's needs, BUT they must be in keeping with the provisions set down in the "National Register of Historic Places."

IV100 ISSUES - Visitor use or experience issues

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 119871 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Cedar Grove - Food service. Having observed the operations of the lodge and snack bar at cedar Grove for more than three decades, I have concluded that the snack bar level of service provided at this facility is a failure. The current facility does not provide decent dining opportunities for lodge guests or campers, nor does it do so for the increasing number of day-users driving into Cedar Grove. Consider raising food service at Cedar Grove Village to a coffee shop level. This would likely entail the construction of a new restaurant building at Cedar Grove Village. Visitors to this area, which contains the defining feature of Kings Canyon National Park, deserve better than a 1970s snack bar to meet their dining needs. No new concessions facilities have been constructed in this area since 1978, but needs have shifted. We need to provide better food service.

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 119870 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: My primary concern at Grant Grove is the character and operation of the Meadow Camp housekeeping cabin complex and the "tent city" section of the original Grant Park Lodge complex. These two complexes, both of which consist of small cabin-type structures built mostly in the 1920s and 1930s, deserve serious rethinking. The visitor experiences offered by these facilities, despite their historic character, have been substandard for decades. These cabins represent a distinctive style of early twentieth century national park accommodations, and in an era that is seeking authentic experiences, they offer the opportunity to step back into national park history. But instead of providing such an experience, the current management of these units considers them to be no more than cheap, overflow places to dump visitors during busy spells.

I strongly urge the NPS to write into the new contract requirements that will see these two cabin complexes managed and operated as significant historic experiences. Such an approach would entail returning the buildings' fixtures and furnishings to a more historic character, rebuilding the tents so that they recreate the experience they provided in earlier times, and providing landscaping in the tent city area to replace the original forest that has been almost completely removed by NPS hazard tree activity. It would also be appropriate at tent city to increase the number of tents to come closer to the historic nature of the complex during the 1920s and 1930s and replacing the bathhouse. Positive visitor experiences would result.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119852 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - The "cabin" experience is a cultural experience for many families. Since the sequoias aren't at risk (as in Giant Forest) in this area and there are no cabins left for rent in the two parks, building new cabins with porches, heat and bathroom would bridge the old to the new with the family experience in the forefront. Could replace Meadow Camp.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119849 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove Employee housing - Separate from guest facilities. There were numerous noise complaints. Employee cabins and/or rooms need to be bigger than those at Wuksachi.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 119848 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Grant Grove - Showers and Laundromat with extended hours for visitors

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 119861 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: From a guest's standpoint, it would be nice if the existing cabins could be replaced with modern cabins with baths, but we assume that's not allowed.

MT1000 Miscellaneous Topics: General Comments

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 119860 Coder's Initials: NH

Comment Text: Should SEKI wish to consult me concerning certain aspects of Grant Grove about which I may have particular knowledge (both human history and natural history), I would be pleased to provide my services via contract or subcontract. Note that I am CCR-registered

with the relevant NAICS codes.

PO4000 Park Operations: Impact Of Proposal And Alternatives

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 119853 **Coder's Initials:** NH

Comment Text: Presently the concessioner is using the gas station for storage. This could possibly be used as a much needed room for NPS meetings, family liaison and emergency situations, first aid room, etc.

VH100 VALUES - Value the history or cultural resources

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Comment Text: Grant Grove - The "cabin" experience is a cultural experience for many families. Since the sequoias aren't at risk (as in Giant Forest) in this area and there are no cabins left for rent in the two parks, building new cabins with porches, heat and bathroom would bridge the old to the new with the family experience in the forefront. Could replace Meadow Camp.

VV100 VALUES - Value the visitor opportunities (activities, programs, recreation)

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 119870 Coder's Initials: NH

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