



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: Monica Buhler, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2010-033 Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Phase II (30936)

The Leadership 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:

- Ensure project staging areas are fenced or screened in the Wawona Meadow area.
- Develop a public outreach plan to inform visitors about the meadow restoration. Contact Marea Ortiz, 372-0662, in the Public Outreach and Engagement office.

//Don L. Neubacher//
Don L. Neubacher

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.*



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2010-033 Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Phase II

PEPC Project Number: 30936

Project Description: Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Phase I involved data gathering on meadow hydrology, wildlife habitat, invasive plant species, rare plant species, cultural landscape, historic features, archeological sites, American Indian use, visitor use, helicopter operations, stock use, fire, PG&E access, trailhead parking, and road and trail maintenance.

The primary goal of this project is to ecologically restore the hydrology, native plant communities, and wildlife habitat to the Wawona Meadow.

Ditches that were constructed in the Wawona Meadow in 1936 have altered its hydrology by disrupting both surface and subsurface flow, lowering groundwater levels, drying out adjacent areas, and altering plant communities. The ditch on the south side of the meadow extends for one mile and was reinforced with 22 buried concrete weirs. Fourteen of those weirs are more than 50% exposed. Most of them are located in the 982-foot length of the ditch that has eroded to 10 feet deep. Water flows through the ditch for most of the year, draining the groundwater from the meadow. This is evidenced by the dominance of upland (rather than wetland) and non-native plants adjacent to the gullied sections of the ditch. The rest of the ditch varies: Some parts have slow moving water (1 to 3 feet deep) and other parts are heavily vegetated with no water flow. The ditch on the north side of the meadow is mostly shallow and has less impact on hydrology. Monitoring of hydrology, plant communities, and wildlife would help direct restoration actions.

This project will implement the following actions:

- Remove concrete weirs above ground level and recycle out of the park.
- Fill sections of the ditch with 4,000 cubic yards of native fill.
- Place “plugs” or grade-control structures to re-contour the area and discourage concentrated water flow.
- In shallower sections of the ditch, pull back the remaining soil berm.
- Salvage plants and topsoil prior to restoration disturbance.
- Collect native seeds from adjacent areas.
- Re-vegetate newly restored areas by replacing topsoil and salvaged plants, seeding, and planting willow.
- Place five wayside exhibits around the meadow loop describing meadow ecology, historic events, and the restoration process.

Permits: 401/404 permits from Army Corps of Engineers and California Regional Water Quality Resources Board.

Equipment: Excavator, dump truck, bobcat, or backhoe would access the project from Wawona Loop road. The access points would be cleared by cultural and natural resource staff. All equipment would be inspected for weed seeds.

Staging: Wawona maintenance yard or parking area for the Meadow Loop Trail.

Timing: Late August to October, when groundwater levels are low.

Project duration: Depending on funding, the project may be implemented in stages and completed by 2010 or 2012.

Project Location:

Mariposa County, CA

Mitigations:

- Ensure project staging areas are fenced or screened in the Wawona Meadow area.
- Develop a public outreach plan to inform visitors about the meadow restoration. Contact Marea Ortiz, 372-0662, in the Public Outreach and Engagement office.

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):

E.4 Removal of non-historic materials and structures in order to restore natural conditions.

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 or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

Park Superintendent //Don L. Neubacher//

Date 7/15/10

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 06/16/2010

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 06/14/2010

Updated May 2007 - per 2004 Departmental Manual revisions and proposed Director's Order 12 changes

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: Yosemite National Park
Project Title: 2010-033 Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Phase II
PEPC Project Number: 30936
Project Type: Resource Management Plan/Site Plan (RMP)
Project Location: County, State: Mariposa, California
Project Leader: Monica Buhler

Preliminary drawings attached? Yes

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

B. 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.			Minor		Filling in the ditch includes an area 5,200 feet long, 60 feet wide and 12 feet deep.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality		Negligible			Temporary exhaust emissions from heavy equipment will occur during the project.
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			Noise levels will be elevated during the meadow restoration. This is temporary in nature.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics			Minor		This project will restore the meadow hydrology to its natural state.

7. Marine or estuarine resources	No				
8. Floodplains or wetlands			Minor		
9. Land use, including occupancy, income, values, ownership, type of use	No				
10. Rare or unusual vegetation – old growth timber, riparian, alpine	No				
11. Species of special concern (plant or animal; state or federal listed or proposed for listing) or their habitat	No				
12. Unique ecosystems, biosphere reserves, World Heritage Sites	No				Yosemite National Park is a World Heritage Site.
13. Unique or important wildlife or wildlife habitat	No				
14. Unique or important fish or fish habitat	No				
15. Introduce or promote non-native species (plant or animal)	No				
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	No				
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	No				
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes		Negligible			
21. Ethnographic resources	No				
22. Museum collections (objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections)	No				
23. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation, income changes, tax base, infrastructure	No				
24. Minority and low income populations, ethnography, size, migration patterns, etc.	No				
25. Energy resources	No				
26. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies	No				
27. Resource, including	No				

energy, conservation potential, sustainability					
28. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.	No				
29. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity	No				This meadow restoration meets the park's long-term management of resources by restoring the meadow hydrology.
30. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?	No				

C. 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?		No		
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?		No		
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?		No		
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		No		
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		No		
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		No		
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?		No		

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?		No		
I. Violate a federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		No		
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?		No		
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)?		No		
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)?		No		

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.

D. 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**

E. INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM SIGNATORIES

<u>Interdisciplinary Team</u>	<u>Field of Expertise</u>
Don L. Neubacher	Superintendent
Kathleen Morse	Chief of Planning
Mark Butler	Chief of Project Management
Katariina Tuovinen	Chief of Administration Management
Ed Walls	Chief of Facilities Management
Niki Nicholas	Chief of Resources Management & Science
Marty Nielson	Chief of Business and Revenue Management
Tom Medema	Chief of Interpretation and Education
Charles Cuvelier	Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection
Monica Buhler	Project Leader
Elexis Mayer	Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Jeannette Simons	NHPA Specialist
Renea Kennec	NEPA Specialist

F. 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
<u>//Renea Kennec//</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kennec	<u>7/9/10</u>
<u>//Elexis Mayer//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Elexis Mayer	<u>7/9/10</u>
<u>//Mark A. Butler//</u> Chief, Project Management – Mark Butler	<u>7/15/10</u>

Approved:

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Don L/ Neubacher//</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>7/15/10</u>

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 06/16/2010

PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: **June 16, 2010**

PROJECT INFORMATION

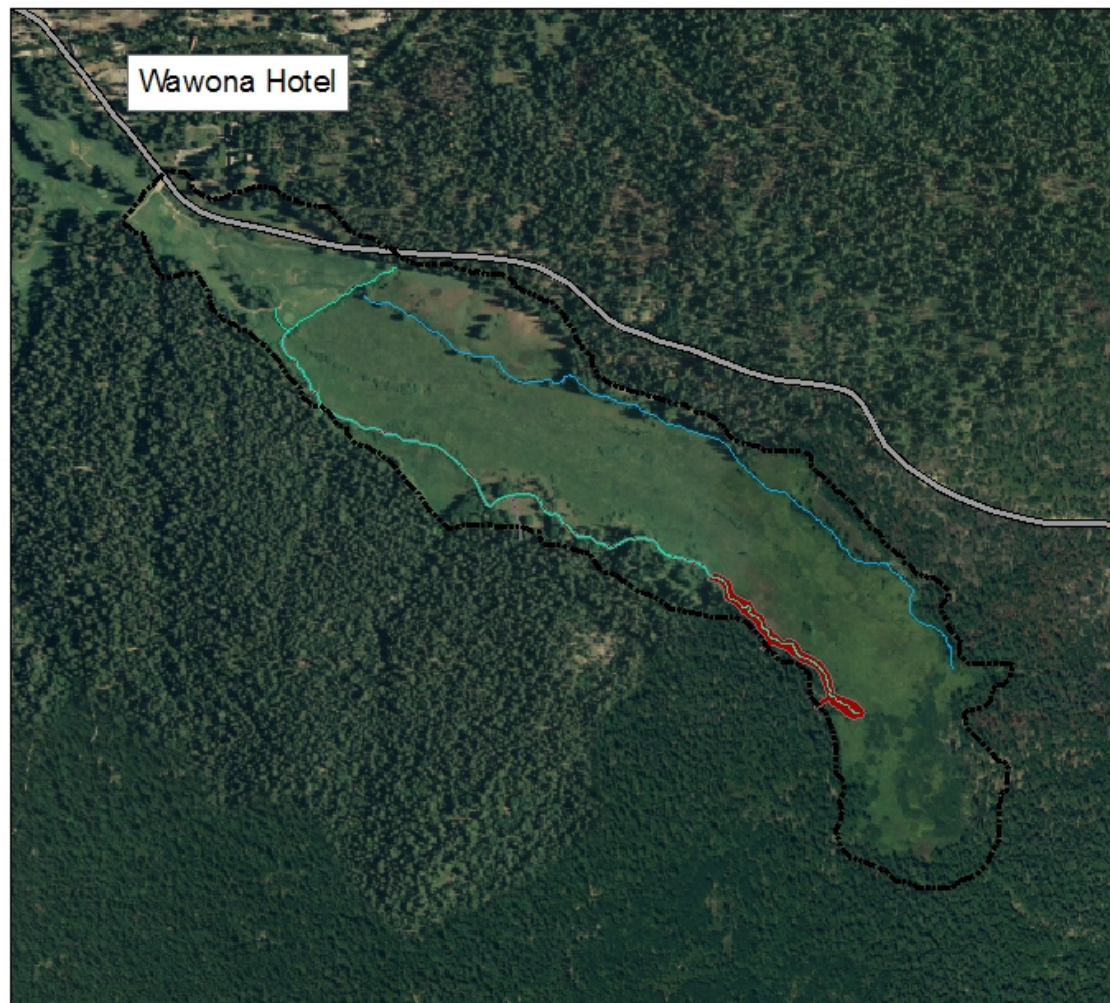
Park Name: Yosemite National Park
Project Title: 2010-033 Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Phase II
PEPC Project Number: 30936
Project Type: Resource Management Plan/Site Plan (RMP)
Project Location: County, State: Mariposa, California
Project Leader: Monica Buhler

PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST				
1. Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		No		
2. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		No		
3. Park rare plants or vegetation?		No		
4. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		No		
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
5. Entail ground disturbance?	Yes			Filling in the ditch includes an area 5,200 feet long, 60 feet wide and 12 feet deep.
6. Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?	Yes			Wawona Archeological District; the assessment of effect is "No Historic Properties Affected."
7. Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?		No		

8. Has a National Register form been completed?		No		
9. Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		No		
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				
10. Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor?		No		
11. Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river?		No		
12. Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		No		
13. Remain consistent with its river segment classification?			N/A	
14. Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?		No		
15. Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and Scenic River corridor?		No		
16. Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		No		
17. Consistent with the provisions in the Merced River Plan Settlement Agreement?			N/A	
WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST				
18. Within designated Wilderness?		No		
19. Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		No		

Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Yosemite National Park, California Meadow size = 190 acres Project area size = 8 acres



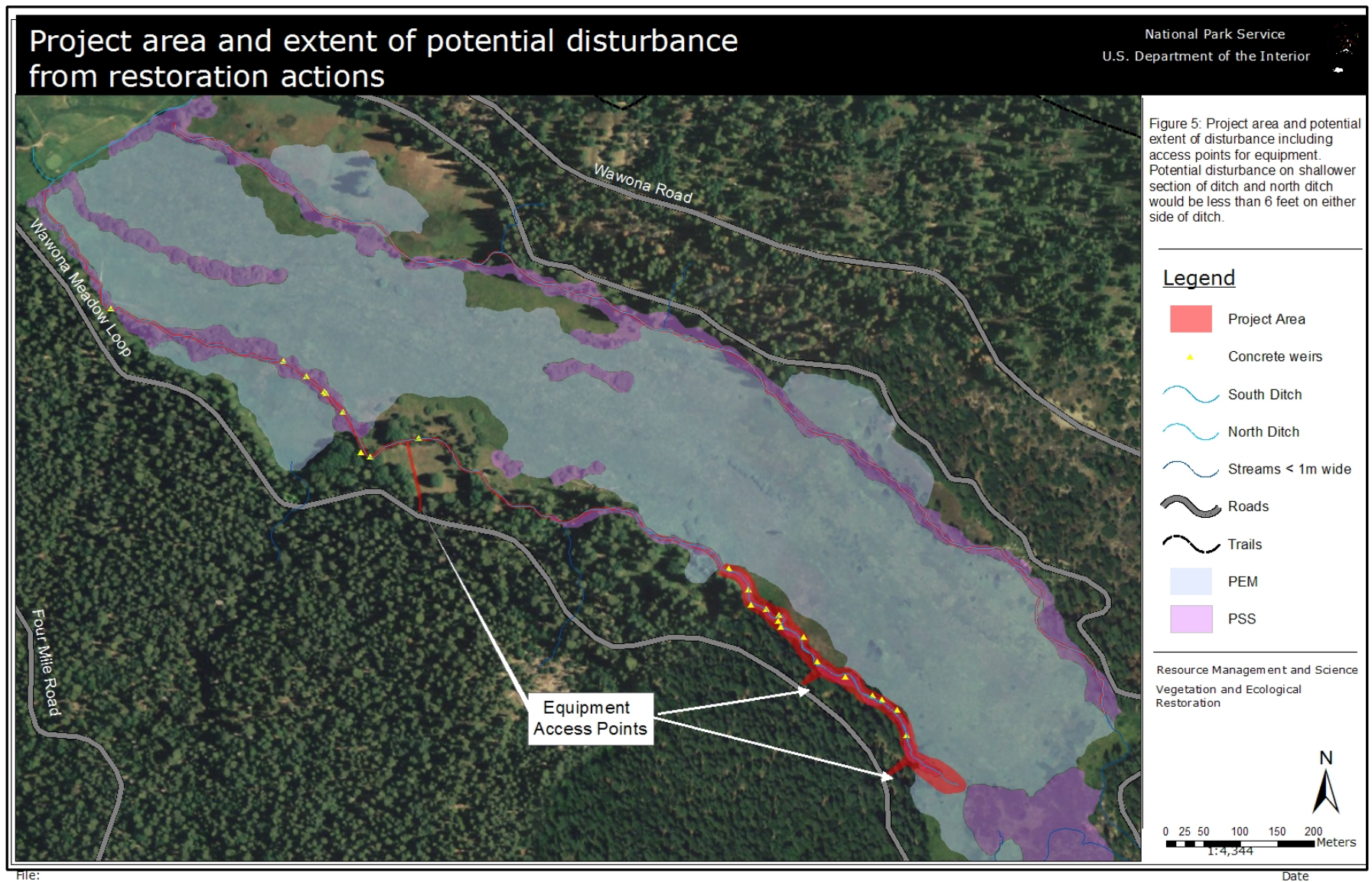
Ditches

- South Ditch
- North Ditch
- Wawona Meadow Loop Road
- Project Area

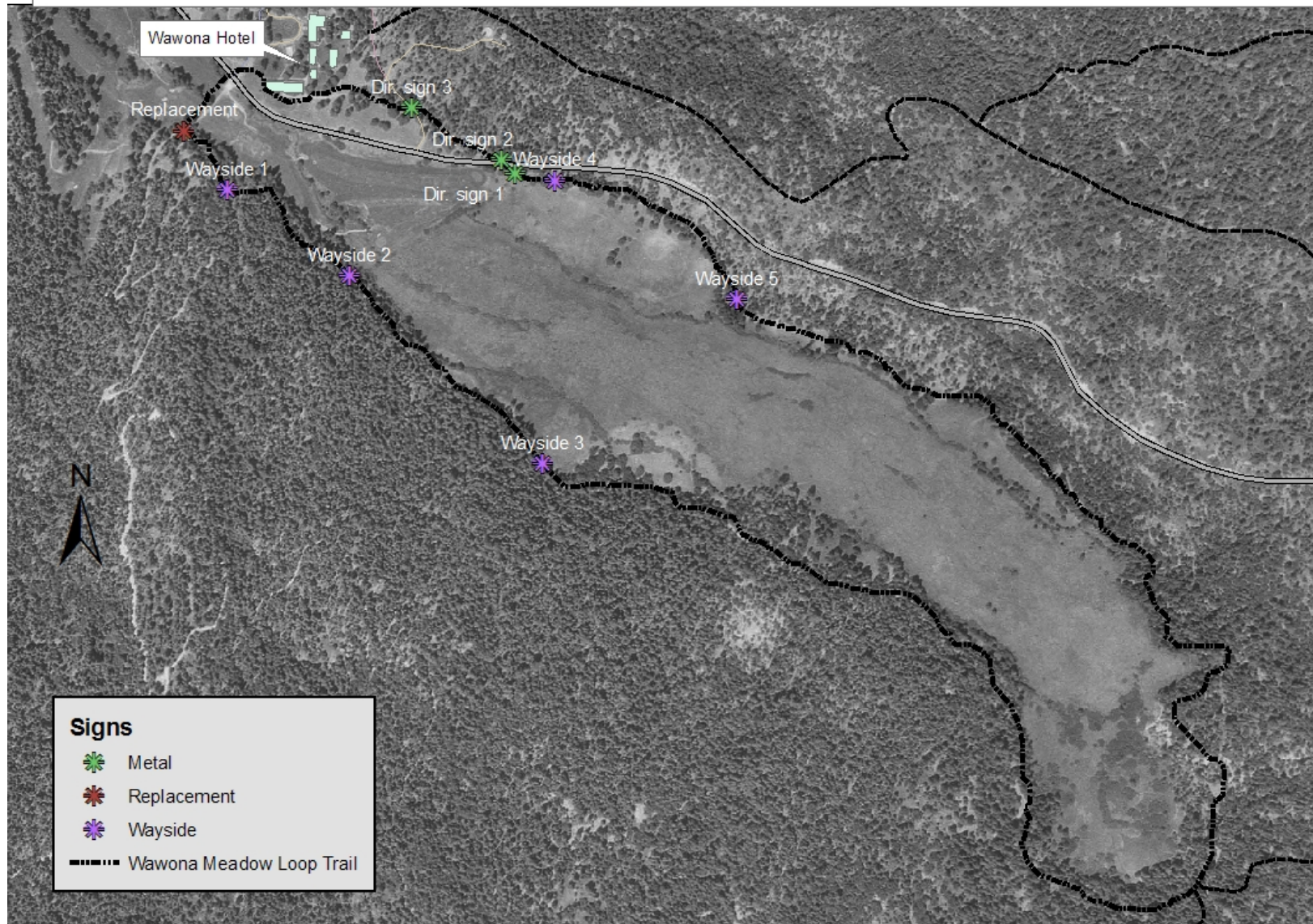
Project area and potential extent of disturbance, including access points for equipment. Potential disturbance on shallower section of ditch and north ditch would be less than 6 feet on either side of ditch.



0 225 450 900 Meters



Wawona Meadow Loop Signs





1936 CCC Digging Ditch



1936 Check Dam Ditch



2009 Incised Ditch



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 06/16/2010

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park **Park District:** Wawona

2. Project Description:

a. **Project Name:** 2010-033 Wawona Meadow Ecological Restoration Phase II

b. **Date:** June 16, 2010

c. **PEPC Project ID Number:** 30936

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

☐ No

☒ Yes, Source or reference: Wawona Archeological District; Wawona 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 Resources:

Archeological resources affected?

Name and numbers: Wawona Archeological District

NR status: 1 - Listed in Register and documented

Cultural landscapes affected?

Name and numbers: Wawona Historic District (CLI/DOE in prep) Location:

Wawona

Ethnographic resources affected?

Name and numbers: American Indian traditional resource area

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

☐ Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure

☐ Replace historic features/elements in kind

☐ Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure

☐ Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain)

☐ 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: Renea Kennec **Date:** June 16, 2010 **Title:** Environmental Protection Specialist **Telephone:** 209-379-1038

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:

☒ Archeologist

Name: Laura Kirn

Date: 05/07/2010

Comments:

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: 05/26/2010

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: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

[X] Anthropologist

Name: Jeannette Simons

Date: 07/15/2010

Comments: Consultation with American Indians is in progress and will continue throughout the project.

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:

[X] Historical Landscape Architect

Name: David Humphrey

Date: 05/13/2010

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: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

No Reviews From: Curator, Historian, 106 Advisor, Other Advisor, Anthropologist

C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessment of Effect:

☐ No Historic Properties Affected ☒ 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: 7/15/10

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 Superintendent //Don L. Neubacher//

Date: 7/15/10

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Office in Yosemite National Park.*