

Chapter 6: Glossary and Acronyms

Glossary of Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Decibel: A unit of measure of sound intensity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Geologic Hazard (Geohazard): Geohazards are any geological or hydrological process that poses a threat to people and/or their property.

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

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

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

Historic site: A historic site is the location of significant event which can be prehistoric or historic in nature. It can represent activities or buildings (standing, ruined, or vanished). It is the

location itself which is of historical interest in a historic site, and it possesses cultural or archeological value regardless of the value of any structures that currently exist on the location. Examples of sites include shipwrecks, battlefields, campsites, natural features, and rock shelters.

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

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

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

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

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA): The federal action that requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of any undertaking on historic properties (see ‘Historic Property,’ above).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rockfall: Newly detached bedrock falling rapidly from a cliff or other steep surface.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acronyms

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act
BSE	Base Safety Earthquake
CARB	California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHBC	California Historic Building Code
CIF	Capital Improvement Fund
CLI	Cultural Landscape Inventory
CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
CMC	California Mechanical Code
CPC	California Plumbing Code
dB	Decibel
dBA	Decibel (on the “A-weighted” scale)
DNC	Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.
DO	Director’s Order
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
HSR	Historic Structures Report
IBC	International Building Code
ICSSC	International Committee on Seismic Safety in Construction
MEP	Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEC	National Electric Code
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	National Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NPS	National Park Service
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment
PM	Particulate Matter
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
TOT	Transit Occupancy Taxes
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey