

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: Rachel Mazur, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2015-007 Yosemite Valley Non-Historic Non-Native Fruit Trees Removal (56390)

The Executive Leadership Team has reviewed the proposed project and completed its environmental assessment documentation, and we have determined the following:

- There will not be any effect on threatened, endangered, or rare species and/or their critical habitat.
- There will be no adverse effect on historical, cultural, or archeological resources.
- There 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.

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:

None

For complete compliance information see PEPC Project 56390.

<u>//Don L. Neubacher//</u> Don L. Neubacher

Doll L. Neubachel

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 National Park Date: 04/28/2015



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2015-007 Yosemite Valley Non-Historic Non-Native Fruit Trees Removal **PEPC Project Number:** 56390 **Project Description:**

This project includes the removal of less than twenty non-historic, non-native fruit trees from Yosemite Valley. The Yosemite forestry crew will cut the (mostly small) trees as time allows either before the nesting season for migratory birds (mid-May), or in conjunction with a nest survey by a qualified biologist. After the trees are cut, they will be taken to the burn pile for disposal. To ensure they do not re-sprout, the invasive plant crew will dab them with herbicides (as provisioned under the Invasive Plant Management Plan EA, 2010), and include a cut stump treatment involving a certified applicator directly applying Garlon 4 (25% concentration) and surfactant (75% concentration) to the cut surface and sides of the stump within 15 minutes of cutting the tree. In some cases, the ages of the trees need to be verified. In those cases, the park Forester will take a short core sample (non-lethal method) of recent growth ring width and diameter, and extrapolate age before cutting them, as was approved by the park historic landscape architect during a field visit in January, 2015.

None of the trees have historic value and therefore do not contribute to the park's historic resources. None of the trees are native and therefore do not contribute to the park's natural resources. The trees likely came from seeds, root suckers, or fruits discarded by visitors and potentially transported by wildlife (Yosemite Orchard Management Plan, 2011). The trees are on roadsides near developments and cause a myriad of problems when they are fruiting and attractive to native wildlife (Graber 1982, Greenleaf et al. 2009). For example, native wildlife feeding from these trees comes into proximity to humans and can then become habituated to human presence, a change in their ecology that often leads to food-conditioning (Matthews 2006, Mazur et al. 2013). In turn, the food-conditioning can be passed on to their young through social learning (Mazur and Seher 2008). Also, when native wildlife cross crowded roads to access the trees, the risk of vehicle-wildlife collisions increases. Further, visitors traveling along crowded roads stop to watch the wildlife in the trees, thus causing traffic blockage. Secondary problems include food-conditioned wildlife approaching humans and the use of water by these non-historic, non-native trees within protected meadows.

The trees included are shown on the map attached:

- 1. The plum tree across from the chapel.
- 2. The plum saplings across from the chapel.
- 3. Three plum trees along the access road to the Curry Orchard that are less than 70 years old.

4. The plum and apple trees at the north edge of Curry Orchard (across the road from the Lower Pines Campground) that are less than 70 years old (park forester will verify the age of these trees using non-lethal short-core sampling to extrapolate age before cutting).

5. The fruit tree at Lower Pines site #70 (park forester will verify the age of these trees using non-lethal short-core sampling to extrapolate age before cutting).

6. The plum saplings and one adult plum at the south-western edge of the Lower Pines Campground past VIP site #88 (facing the Curry Orchard).

7. The two apple trees and one plum tree at the north end of the boardwalk that comes from Curry and ends up adjacent to the Lower Pines Campground.

8. The little apple tree in Ahwahnee Meadow.

9. The three trees across from Ahwahnee Meadow near the trail (park forester will verify the age of these trees using non-lethal short-core sampling to extrapolate age before cutting).

Project Location:

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):

E.2 Restoration of noncontroversial native species into suitable habitats within their historic range and elimination of exotic species.

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.

Superintendent: //Don L. Neubacher//

Date: 6/1/15

Don L. Neubacher

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 04/28/2015

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:	2015-007 Yosemite Valley Non-Historic Non-Native Fruit Trees Removal
PEPC Project Number:	56390
Project Type:	Routine Maintenance (ROU)
Project Location:	
County, State:	Mariposa, California
County, State:	Mariposa, California
Project Leader:	Rachel Mazur

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.	No				The trees will be cut off at the ground level.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality	No				
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			There will be temporary chainsaw noise during the tree removal.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics	No				
7. Marine or estuarine resources	No				

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
8. Floodplains or wetlands	No				
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				

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
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes	No				Only non-historic trees will be removed.
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 energy, conservation potential, sustainability	No				
28. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.	No				

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
29. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity		Negligible			Native wildlife has become habituated to the trees fruit. Removing the trees is one strategy to long-term management of resources.
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		

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
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		No		

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
13112)?				

D. OTHER INFORMATION

- 1. Are personnel preparing this form familiar with the site? Yes
- **1.A.** Did personnel conduct a site visit? Yes, the park forester and the historic landscape architect.
- **2.** Is the project in an approved plan such as a General Management Plan or an Implementation Plan with an accompanying NEPA document? No
- 3. Are there any interested or affected agencies or parties? No
- 3.A. Did you make a diligent effort to contact them? N/A
- **4.** Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? Yes, February Tribal Spreadsheet; no comments were received.
- **5.** 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

Interdisciplinary Team	Field of Expertise
Don L. Neubacher	Superintendent
Kathleen Morse	Chief of Planning
Randy Fong	Chief of Project Management
Jeff Hilliard	Chief of Administration Management
Ron Borne	Chief of Facilities Management
Linda C. Mazzu	Chief of Resources Management & Science
Kris Kirby	Chief of Business and Revenue Management
Tom Medema	Chief of Interpretation and Education
Kevin Killian	Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection
Rachel Mazur	Project Leader
Madelyn Ruffner	Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Renea Kennec	NEPA Specialist

E. INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM SIGNATORIES

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>5/18/15</u>
<u>//Madelyn Ruffner//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Madelyn Ruffner	_ <u>5/27/15</u>
<u>//Randy Fong//</u> Chief, Project Management – Randy Fong	5/29/15

Approved:

Superintendent	Date
_//Don L. Neubacher//	6/1/15
Don L. Neubacher	

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: April 28, 2015

PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name:	Yosemite National Park
Project Title:	2015-007 Yosemite Valley Non-Historic Non-Native Fruit Trees Removal
PEPC Project Number:	56390
Project Type:	Routine Maintenance (ROU)
Project Location:	
County, State:	Mariposa, California
Project Leader:	Rachel Mazur

PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions			N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST		1	1	1
Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		No		
Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		No		
Park rare plants or vegetation?		No		
Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		No		
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST	I			
Entail ground disturbance?		No		
Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?		No		
Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?		No		The trees to be removed are within the Yosemite Valley Historic District but they are non-historic and therefore will not alter the cultural landscape.
Has a National Register form been completed?	Yes			
Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		No		

ESF Addendum - Yosemite Valley Non-Historic Non-Native Fruit Trees Removal - PEPC ID: 56390

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				1
Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor?	Yes			Merced River
Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river?		No		
Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		No		
Remain consistent with its river segment classification?	Yes			
Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?		No		
Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and Scenic River corridor?		No		
Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		No		
WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST				·
Within designated Wilderness?		No		
Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		No		

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES

- A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING
- 1. Park: Yosemite National Park
- 2. Project Description:

Project Name: 2015-007 Yosemite Valley Non-Historic Non-Native Fruit Trees Removal Prepared by: Renea Kennec Date Prepared: 04/28/2015 Telephone: 209-379-1038 PEPC Project Number: 56390 Locations: County, State: Mariposa, CA

Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d]) Yosemite Valley Historic District; Yosemite Valley Archeological District

3. Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify historic properties?

No X Yes

Source or reference:

4. Potentially Affected Resources:

Historical Structures/Resources Affected: Name and numbers: Yosemite Valley Historic District NR status: 1 - Listed in Register and documented

Ethnographic Resources Affected: Name and numbers: Resources of Religious and Cultural Significance

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

- No Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure
- No Replace historic features/elements in kind
- No Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure
- Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment No (inc. terrain)
- Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric)
- No to a historic setting or cultural landscape
- No Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible

No	Disturb,	destroy,	or make ethno	graphic r	resources	inaccessible
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Yes	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. Supporting Study Data: (Attach if feasible; if action is in a plan, EA or EIS, give name and project or page number.)

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] Anthropologist Name: Mike Turek Date: 05/14/2015

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: _____ No Potential to Cause Effect _____ No Historic Properties Affected _____ X_ No Adverse Effect _____ Adverse Effect _____ Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

[X] Archeologist Name: Sonny Montague Date: 04/23/2015

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: _____ No Potential to Cause Effect _____ No Historic Properties Affected _____ No Adverse Effect _____ Adverse Effect _____ Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

Doc Method: Park Specific Programmatic Agreement

[X] Historical Architect Name: Charles Tonetti Date: 05/01/2015 Comments: No historic structures are impacted by the project.

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: ____ No Potential to Cause Effect ____ No Historic Properties Affected ____ No Adverse Effect ____ Adverse Effect ____ Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

[X] Historical Landscape Architect Name: Kevin McCardle Date: 05/01/2015

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance [] Assessment of Effect: <u>X</u> No Potential to Cause Effect <u>No Historic Properties Affected</u> No Adverse Effect <u>Adverse Effect</u> Streamlined Review Recommendations for conditions or stipulations: Fruit trees south of Ahwahnee Meadow are possibly historic and should not be removed.

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

C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessment of Effect:

No Potential to Cause Effects

No Historic Properties Affected

X No Adverse Effect

Adverse Effect

2. Documentation Method:

[] 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:

[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.

1999 Programmatic Agreement as amended in 2014.

[] E. COMBINED NEPA/NHPA Document

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

- [] G. Memo to SHPO/THPO
- [] H. Memo to ACHP

SHPO/THPO Notes:

3. Additional Consulting Parties Information:

Additional Consulting Parties: No

4. Stipulations and 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.

5. Mitigations/Treatment Measures:

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.

D. RECOMMENDED BY PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR:

Historic Preservation Officer:

Kimball Koch //Kimball Koch// Date: 5/19/15

E. 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.

Superintendent: //Don L. Neubacher//

Date: 6/1/15

Don L. Neubacher

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



Gurry Orchard GOOgle earth

N

Imagery Date: 5/26/2014 37°44'37.25" N 119°34'45.95" W elev 3969 ft eye alt 10996 ft 🔘

7. 6.