



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7615(YOSE-PM)

Memorandum

To: Jim Donovan, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2017-001 Day-use Reservations for Commercial Tour Buses and Automobiles (69161)

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 69161.

//Woody Smeck//

Woody Smeck

*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

Letter of Compliance Completion - Day-use Reservations for Commercial Tour Buses and Automobiles - PEPC ID: 69161



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2017-001 Day-use Reservations for Commercial Tour Buses and Automobiles

PEPC Project Number: 69161

Project Description:

The National Park Service (NPS) will develop, test and refine a pilot program to require that commercial tour companies inform park managers of organized visits so that an adequate number of parking spaces remain available to accommodate oversized vehicles (commercial tour buses or motor coaches). The NPS will also provide an opportunity for park visitors to reserve a parking space for personal vehicles in an area formerly used for recreation rentals (rafting and bicycles) in Half Dome Village. Proposed actions pertain to parking areas that were designed through prior processes of environmental review and plan approval. These parking areas were designed in 2014 and are currently undergoing construction and nearing completion. No physical changes to park facilities are proposed. The NPS will conduct the pilot program from early May through September 2017, which will be repeated in peak season 2018.

The need to manage the kinds and amounts of vehicle use and parking areas was established by the Record of Decision for the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias and the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan (MRP). The Mariposa Grove restoration plan and the MRP included socioeconomic analyses that acknowledged the park's importance to the region, especially in tourism and service sectors of the economy. The proposed actions will not have a measurable effect on park visitation or the regional economy.

The parking layout and design for the Mariposa Grove includes four spaces for commercial tour buses at South Entrance. In the Yosemite Falls parking area, twenty-two spaces will be provided for oversized vehicles. An interim design for the Half Dome Village site provides for 90 new parking spaces, half of which were not available for public use in the past. Both parking areas were designed to reflect field observations and studies of visitor use and demand documented in 2009, 2010, and 2011.

To monitor numbers of automobiles and commercial tour buses, the NPS uses automatic traffic counters, field observation of parking areas, and vehicle data collected at park entrance stations. When completed in 2014, the MRP established a maximum capacity of 5,300 vehicles at one time (VAOT) in east Yosemite Valley. Since 2014, the number of vehicles (average daily trips; a 24-hour measure distinct from VAOT) recorded at count stations has increased during peak periods from 6,000 to 7,000 and 8,000 vehicles on some days; typically Saturdays and Sundays in spring and summer. Park visitation has increased from previous record highs of 4 million in 1996, 3.8 million in 2012, and 4.1 million in 2015, to over 5 million in 2016.

East Yosemite Valley contains less than 1,800 parking spaces for daytime visitors. The reservation system will apply to only five percent of the total number of spaces that will be available in 2017 and 2018. Reservations for parking spaces will be accepted through the same NPS contractor who processes reservations for campgrounds and Half Dome permits. The NPS will not collect a reservation fee; however, the contractor will collect a service or transaction fee.

By allocating a limited number of reserved parking spaces for a specific date, a certain number of visitors will be guaranteed a parking space. A parking reservation will be particularly useful to those who are traveling great

distances to visit Yosemite National Park, visitors who do not have flexibility to visit the park on any given day. The parking reservation program will allow visitors to reserve a parking space on Saturdays or Sundays only, plus the Memorial Day and Labor Day holidays. Parking reservations will be available all day, until midnight. Reservations may be canceled or rescheduled; however, reservations are non-transferable.

Project Location:

Mariposa County, CA

Mitigation:

- No mitigations identified.

CE Citation: D.2 Minor changes in amounts or types of visitor use for the purpose of ensuring visitor safety or resource protection in accordance with existing regulations.

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

Acting

Superintendent:

//Woody Smeck//

Woody Smeck

Date:

2/16/17

*The signed original
Environmental*

Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
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, 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 (EO 12898)?	No	
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	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	



ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: 2017-001 Day-use Reservations for Commercial Tour Buses and Automobiles
PEPC Project Number: 69161
Project Type: Special Use Permit (SUP)
Project Location:
County, State: Mariposa, California
Project Leader: Jim Donovan

B. RESOURCE IMPACTS TO CONSIDER:

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Air Air Quality	None	
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species	None	
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat	None	
Biological Vegetation	None	
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species	None	
Cultural Archeological Resources	None	
Cultural Cultural Landscapes	None	
Cultural Ethnographic Resources	Potential	Tribal consultation was conducted via Tribal Spreadsheet mailed in January 27, 2017 as an FYI. This project will not affect known ethnographic properties.
Cultural Museum Collections	None	

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Cultural Prehistoric/historic structures	None	
Geological Geologic Features	None	
Geological Geologic Processes	None	
Lightscares Lightscares	None	
Other Human Health and Safety	None	
Other Other	None	
Socioeconomic Land Use	None	
Socioeconomic Minority and low-income populations, size, migration patterns, etc.	None	
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic	Potential	The availability of commercial bus parking spaces in Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Falls parking area and a portion of the automobile parking spaces in the Yosemite Falls parking area will be managed through a reservation system.
Soundscapes Soundscapes	None	
Viewsheds Viewsheds	None	
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources	None	
Visitor Use and Experience Visitor Use and Experience	Potential	Five percent of valley parking spaces will only be available by advance reservations.
Water Floodplains	None	
Water Marine or Estuarine Resources	None	
Water Water Quality or Quantity	None	
Water Wetlands	None	

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Water Wild and Scenic River	None	
Wilderness Wilderness	None	

Recommended:

Compliance Specialists	Date
<i>//Renea Kennec//</i>	<i>2/15/2017</i>
_____	_____
Compliance Specialist –Renea Kennec	
<i>//Madelyn Ruffner//</i>	<i>2/15/2017</i>
_____	_____
Compliance Program Manager – Madelyn Ruffner	
<i>//Ron Gaunt//</i>	<i>2/16/2017</i>
_____	_____
Acting Chief, Project Management – Ron Gaunt	

Approved:

Acting Superintendent	Date
<i>//Woody Smeck//</i>	<i>2/17/2017</i>
_____	_____
Woody Smeck	

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Yosemite National Park.*



ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park

2. **Project Description:**

Project Name: 2017-001 Day-use Reservations for Commercial Tour Buses and Automobiles

Prepared by: Renea Kennec **Date Prepared:** 01/31/2017 **Telephone:** 209-379-1038

PEPC Project Number: 69161

Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d])

Yosemite Valley Archeological District

Yosemite Valley Historic District

South Entrance Historic District

Although the spaces to be reserved are within these historic properties, no historic properties would be affected by the reservation process.

Ethnographic Resources Affected Notes: Tribal consultation was conducted via Tribal Spreadsheet mailed in January 27, 2017 as an FYI. This project will not affect known ethnographic properties.

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

☐ No
☒ Yes

Source or reference:

4. **Potentially Affected Resources:** None

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
- ☐ No 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. 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:

☒ 106 Advisor
Name: Kimball Koch
Date: 01/31/2017

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:

☒ Anthropologist
Name: Eirik Thorsgard
Date: 01/27/2017
Comments: Tribal consultation was conducted via Tribal Spreadsheet mailed in January 27/2017 as an FYI. This project will not affect known ethnographic properties.

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:

☒ Archeologist
Name: Sara Dolan
Date: 01/24/2017

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:

☒ Historian
Name: Scott Carpenter
Date: 01/24/2017

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:

Assessment of Effect Form – 2017-001 Day-use Reservations for Commercial Tour Buses and Automobiles - PEPC ID: 69161

☒ Historical Architect
Name: Kimball Koch
Date: 01/31/2017

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:

No Reviews From: Curator, Other Advisor, Historical Landscape Architect

C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessment of Effect:

☐ No Potential to Cause Effects
☒ No Historic Properties Affected
☐ 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:

☒ 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.

Explanation: 1999 PA as amended in 2014 and 2016

☐ 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:

Section 106 Coordinator:

Kimball Koch //Kimball Koch// **Date:** 2/15/2017

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.

Acting Superintendent: //Woody Smeck// **Date:** 2/15/2017
Woody Smeck

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the Environmental Planning and Compliance
Office in Yosemite National Park.*