



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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## Yosemite News Release

November 7, 2006  
For Immediate Release

### Yosemite National Park Announces Opening of Public Scoping for *El Portal Road Reconstruction—Pohono Bridge to the Big Oak Flat Road Intersection*

Yosemite National Park is announcing public scoping in preparation of the **El Portal Road Reconstruction—Pohono Bridge to the Big Oak Flat Road Intersection Project**. This project will be accompanied by an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes the environmental effects of a range of project alternatives.

The El Portal Road is a park road that begins at the western Yosemite National Park boundary. It begins at the eastern end of California State Highway 140 and continues 7.5 miles east to the Pohono Bridge. The initial approach to this repair contemplated a one mile road segment, often referred to as “Segment D”. This planned approach would have studied optimum design for the intersection at Big Oak Flat Road, and road portions east of the severely damaged area.

However, in response to the recent ruling by the Eastern District Court, which directs the National Park Service to prepare a new comprehensive management plan for the Merced River, only those portions of the road that are at imminent risk of failure will be addressed at this time. This area has undergone five emergency repairs since 1997, but a complete reconstruction is needed so that the road can withstand future high water events.

Important considerations throughout the planning process will be to maintain the road’s essential historic character as a winding, narrow, mountain road, and to consider the protection and enhancement of the Wild and Scenic River. Project alternatives and their environmental effects will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and will incorporate input from park staff and interested public.

Scoping is an opportunity early in a planning process for the public, gateway communities, partner organizations, and other local, state and federal agencies to suggest issues to be considered in the proposed draft EA. Public ideas and concerns help to identify the range of issues that should be addressed in this planning effort. Involvement of the public also helps to insure that future actions are consistent with the National Park Service mission, enabling legislation, and other relevant laws and policies.

The public scoping process for this project will open on **Monday, November 13, 2006** and will be open until 45 days after the *Federal Register* publication of a Scoping Notice to prepare an EA. The Scoping Notice is expected to be published in mid-late November 2006. A link to project information will be posted on the park’s website at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning).

**Three public meetings** will take place in November. A public walkthrough of the project area will be held from 10am to 12pm on Wednesday, November 29, 2006. Those interested in participating in the public site visit, please RSVP by calling our planning information line (209/379-1365) or by emailing us at:

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[yose\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:yose_planning@nps.gov). Please provide your name and mailing address so that we can send you an orientation letter. Following this walkthrough, a public meeting is scheduled for 1:00pm at the monthly Open House in the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center Auditorium. Additional evening meetings will be held at Groveland Tenaya Elementary School (19177 State Highway 120, Groveland), from 4pm to 8pm on Tuesday, November 28, 2006, and in the Mariposa County Government Center (5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa), from 4pm to 8pm on Thursday, November 30, 2006.

Written scoping comments should be postmarked no later than **45 days after publication of the Scoping Notice in the *Federal Register***. Comments can be submitted at public meetings, by mail, fax, email, and through the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) commenting system. A draft document should be available for public review in summer 2007. To request a hard copy or CD ROM version of the Draft EA and to submit written comments:

Mail: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park  
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PO Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389

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Email: [YOSE\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:YOSE_planning@nps.gov)

PEPC: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>

For more information on park planning efforts, visit the website at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning)

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