



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: Jim Vandenberg, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Acting Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2009-069 The Ahwahnee Fourth Floor Balcony Replace
TREX
Decking Material (26236)

The Management 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:

- No mitigations identified.

//Dennis Shram// (acting)
David V. Uberuaga

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: 2009-069 **Ahwahnee Fourth Floor Balcony Replace TREX Decking Material**

PEPC ID: **26236**

Project Description: Delaware North Company (DNC) proposes to replace the current decking system on the 4th Floor Balcony (Solarium) deck at The Ahwahnee. The current 1,300 square foot Solarium Deck is constructed from TREX composition decking material. TREX decking was constructed in rectangular panels (approximately 4' x 3') and placed in a pattern on the balcony deck during the re-roofing project that occurred 2003-2005. Since its installation, the TREX composition has broken down and eroded (see photos). As a result, the eroding deck material has caused clogs in the deck drainage system underneath the TREX. Water that can not drain off is pooling above the flashing to the wall and causing leaking into the building. Additionally, the TREX decking panels do not appear stable and are not providing a positive visitor experience to the guest. The original TREX vendor is no longer in business and replacing the current deck is outside the concessioner's responsibility.

At this time, it is unknown what the original decking material was on the solarium deck. While many of the other balcony decks at the Ahwahnee were originally constructed of concrete, it is not certain that the same material was used on the Solarium Deck.

DNC considered several options to correct the decking system (outlined below under Background) while consulting with the National Park Service, History, Architecture, and Landscapes (HAL). This project proposes to correct the existing decking system by replacing the TREX material with ironwood planks, a rot-resistant hardwood. Finishing the deck with wood panels will allow for the easiest removal and replacement if necessary, and allows access to the iron plate below in case future problems need to be addressed on the roof. Finally, a wood deck provides an appropriate finished appearance for Ahwahnee guests.

The Division of Resources Management and Science advised that while lightweight concrete would most resemble the likely original material, natural rot-resistant wood decking was an acceptable material to use to replace the Solarium Deck.

Scope of Work:

- TREX decking material will be removed and discarded appropriately.
- Drainage systems will be cleared of debris and eroded materials.
- Ironwood deck panels will be constructed (most likely off-site) and installed in a checkered pattern on the Solarium Deck (similar pattern to existing).
- Ironwood will be stained a natural color.

Justification: The TREX material on the Solarium Deck (4th Floor Balcony) has deteriorated rapidly in the varied weather conditions. It is becoming unsafe due to deflection in the finish surface. In addition,

small particles from the deteriorated material are plugging the gaps in the slats that are designed to drain water to the lead floor below. This is causing ponding on the deck surface, which is exceeding the height of the flashing at the walls and leaking water into the guest rooms below.

Project Goals:

- Correct deficiencies in TREX decking system to improve water drainage off the deck and to provide a quality decking system for Ahwahnee guests.
- Protect the Ahwahnee Hotel National Historic Landmark from deteriorating materials and water damage as a result.

Special Considerations:

- The Ahwahnee is a National Historic Landmark. All proposed materials and the scope of the project will be reviewed by NPS RMS staff and the Historic Preservation Officer.
- Upon routine concession inspections, NPS Division of BRM, Concessions Management Branch recorded the deficiency of the TREX decking system in the May 2009 inspection and required that DNC fix the deficiency by August 1, 2009.
- Historical Photo Documentation will take place as part of this project. Operational Concerns: Work will be scheduled to minimize impact on guests and will be subject to weather constraints.

Project Locations:

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):

C.4 Routine maintenance and repairs to cultural resource sites, structures, utilities and grounds under an approved Historic Structures Preservation Guide or Cyclic Maintenance Guide; or if the action would not adversely affect the cultural resource.

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.

Park Acting Superintendent //Dennis Shram// (acting)

Date 10/26/09

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 10/02/2009

Updated May 2007 - per 2004 DM revisions and proposed DO-12 changes

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: **Yosemite NP**
 Project Title: **2009-069 The Ahwahnee Fourth Floor Balcony Replace TREX Decking Material**
 PEPC Project
 Number: **26236**
 Project Type: **Capital Improvement (CI)**
 Project Location: County, State: **Mariposa, California** District: **Yosemite Valley**
 Project Leader: **Jim Vandenberg**

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.	No				
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality		Negligible			The ironwood installation will require the temporary use of construction equipment.
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			Equipment use will result in temporary noises.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics	No				
7. Marine or estuarine resources	No				
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; no historic properties would be adversely affected by implementing this project.
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)		Negligible			See Comment 1, below.
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	No				
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	No				The balcony will be closed during the installation.
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure		Negligible			The Ahwahnee National Historical Landmark.
20. Cultural landscapes		Negligible			Yosemite Valley Historic District.
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				
29. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity		Negligible			The installation of the durable ironwood decking meets the park's long-term management of resources.
30. Other important environment resources (e.g. geothermal, paleontological resources)?	No				

Comments:

1. Ensure that all equipment and materials brought into the park are free of non-native, invasive plants and animals and noxious weeds. All staff working on the project shall be informed of and follow best management practices for preventing the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive species as described in Division 1 Specifications, Section 1355.

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?		N		
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?		N		Mitigated; the assessment of effect is "No Adverse Effect."
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?		N		
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		N		
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		N		

F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		N		
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?		N		
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?		N		
I. Violate a federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		N		
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?		N		
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)?		N		
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)?		N		See C. Potential Resource Effects to Consider Comment 1, above.

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>
David V. Uberuaga	Acting Superintendent
Katariin Tuovinen	Acting Deputy Superintendent
Kristina Rylands	Acting Chief of Planning
Mark Butler	Chief of Project Management
Katariina Tuovinen	Chief of Administration Management
Paul Laymon	Acting Chief of Facilities Management
Niki Nicholas	Chief of Resources Management & Science
Marty Nielson	Chief of Business and Revenue Management
Tom Medema	Acting Chief of Interpretation and Education
Steve Shackelton	Chief Ranger
Jim Vandenberg	Project Leader
Elexis Mayer	Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Jeannette Simons	NHPA Specialist
Renea Kenec	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 Kenec//</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kenec	<u>10/21/09</u>
<u>//Elexis Mayer//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Elexis Mayer	<u>10/22/09</u>
<u>//Michael R. Wickman// (acting)</u> Chief, Project Management – Mark Butler	<u>10/23/09</u>

Approved:

Acting Superintendent	Date
<u>//Dennis Shram// (acting)</u> David V. Uberuaga	<u>10/26/09</u>

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: **October 2, 2009**

PROJECT INFORMATION

Park Name: Yosemite NP

Project Number: 26236

Project Type: Capital Improvement (CI)

Project Location: County, State: Mariposa, California District, Section: Yosemite Valley

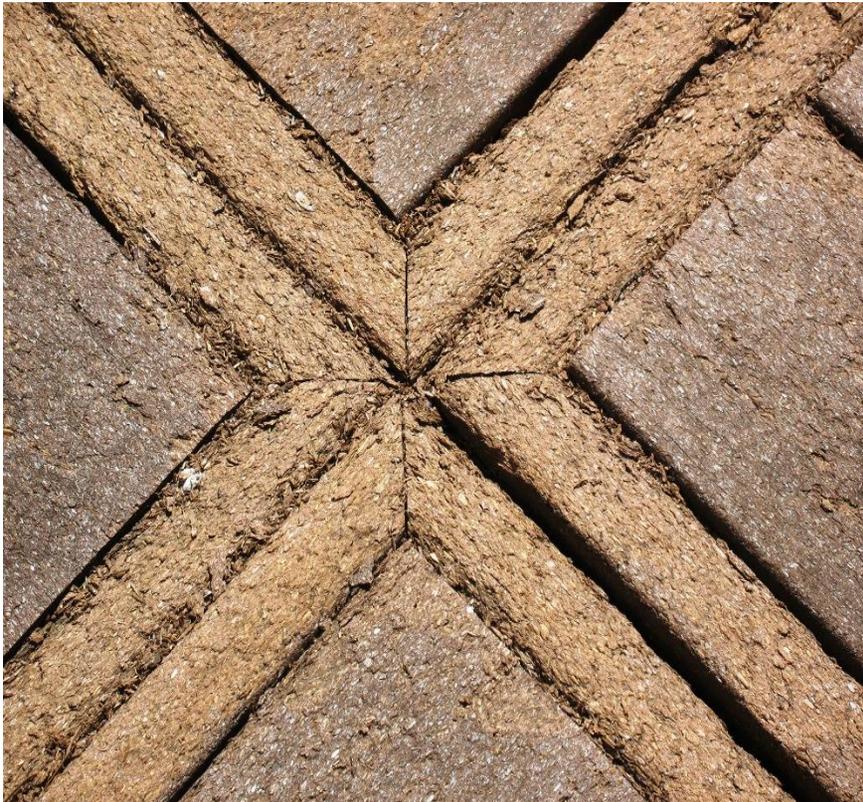
Project Manager: Jim Vandenberg

Project Title: 2009-069 Ahwahnee Fourth Floor Balcony Replace TREX Decking Material

PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
1.SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST				
2. Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		X		
3. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		X		
4. Park rare plants or vegetation?		X		
5. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		X		
6.NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
7. Entail ground disturbance?		X		
8. Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?		X		
9. Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?		X		
10. Has a National Register form been completed?		X		
11. Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		X		
12.WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				
13. Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor?	X			Merced River.
14. Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river?		X		
15. Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		X		
16. Remain consistent with its river segment classification?		X		
17. Protect and enhance river ORVs?			X	

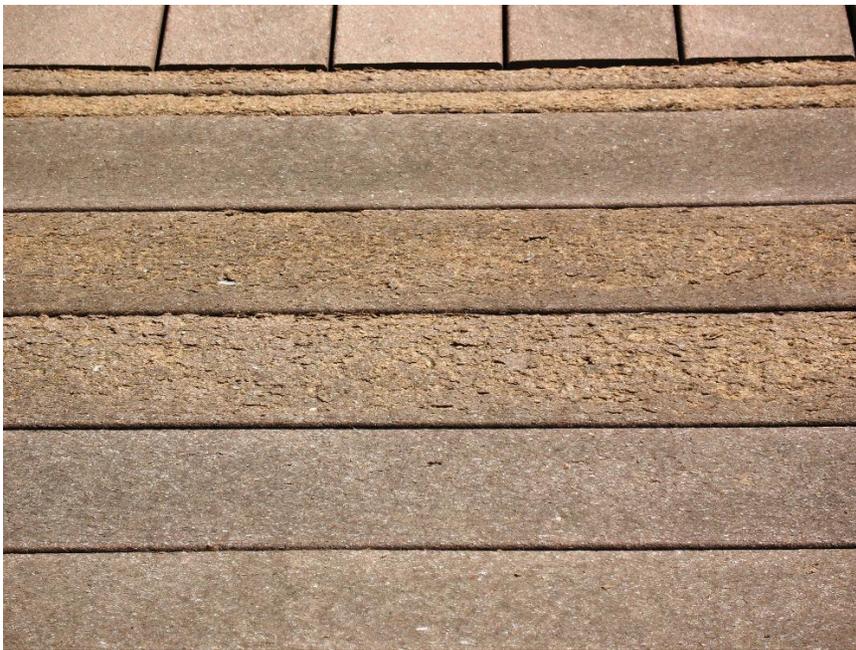
18. Fall within the River Protection Overlay?		X		
19. If Yes, remain consistent with conditions of the River Protection Overlay?			X	
20. Remain consistent with the areas Management Zoning?			X	
21. Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?		X		
22. Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and Scenic River corridor?		X		
23. Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		X		
100. WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST				
101. Within designated Wilderness?		X		
102. Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		X		



Deterioration #1 – Note the eroded particles of the TREX material. These particles are causing drainage blockages under the decking system.



Deterioration #2 - Cracking and uneven surfaces.



Deterioration #3 – Eroded flaking material.



Deterioration #4 – Uneven surface, eroded material, uneven finish.



Photo #5 - Note the panel design and uneven finish.



Photo #6 - Uneven finish, sagging, and cracking TREX boards.



ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. Park: **Yosemite NP** Park District: **Yosemite Valley**

2. Project Description:

a. Project Name: **2009-069 The Ahwahnee Fourth Floor Balcony Replace TREX Decking Material**

b. Date: **September 1, 2009**

c. PEPC Project ID Number: **26236**

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

 No

 X Yes, Source or reference: **The Ahwahnee National Historical Landmark; Yosemite Valley Historic District; Yosemite Valley Archeological 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:

Historical structures/resources affected?

Name and number(s): **The Ahwahnee National Historical Landmark**

NR status: **7 - A designated National Historic Landmark**

Cultural landscapes affected?

Name and number(s): **Yosemite Valley Historic District**

NR status: **1 - Listed in Register and documented**

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

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

 No Replace historic features/elements in kind

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

 No Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain)

 No 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: **September 1, 2009** Title: **Environmental Protection Assistant** 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: **08/17/2009**
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: **No Potential to Cause Effects [800.3(a)(1)]**

Historical Architect
Name: **Sueann Brown**
Date: **08/19/2009**
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**

Historical Landscape Architect

Name: **David Humphrey**

Date: **07/17/2009**

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: 10/5/09

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 Acting Superintendent //Dennis Shram// (acting)

Date: 10/26/09

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Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in
Yosemite National Park.*