



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: Victoria Hartman, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2010-038 Harden Road Rewilding II (30950)

The Leadership Team has reviewed the proposed project 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:

- Ensure staging areas are on bare ground or in previously disturbed locations.
- Ensure that soil disturbance is kept to a minimum; salvage plants, save topsoil, and replace plants in order of removal.
- American Indian site visit is scheduled for Sept 7, 2010. Measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts developed as a result of the consultation will be implemented into the field operations/project execution, as appropriate.

\\ Don L. Neubacher \\

Don L. Neubacher

Enclosure (with attachments)

cc: Statutory Compliance File



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2010-038 Harden Road Rewilding II

PEPC Project Number: 30950

Project Description: This project proposes to re-establish natural hydrology and native vegetation and enhance the wilderness character in the Potential Wilderness Addition (PWA) along two unmaintained road sections beyond the White Wolf spray fields.

Segment 1 encompasses The Great Sierra Wagon Road (GSR) from below the spray field to the Aspen Valley Junction, and Segment 2 is the portion of the unmaintained road (branches north off the GSR at the Aspen Valley Junction) heading toward the Pate Valley / Smith Meadow Junction. Visitors hiking from White Wolf to Aspen Valley, Smith Meadow or Pate Valley initially travel along the Great Sierra Wagon Road.

Segment 1 is a PWA as well as a historical road. Due to the unmaintained nature of Segment 1 and occasional administrative vehicle traffic, there are numerous erosion problems including rills and gullies resulting in damage to both cultural, natural and wilderness resources. This project will repair those erosion problems, and facilitate the movement of water through the project area while maintaining the Great Sierra Wagon Road prism. Work will be done with hand tools and a mini-excavator as appropriate. Natural barriers will be placed to create a more trail-like atmosphere while retaining the cultural resources of the road and protect wilderness values by preventing administrative vehicle traffic along the unmaintained section of this road.

Segment 2 work consists of reducing the unmaintained road to a single track hiking trail by removing the berms left from the construction of the road, using hand tools and a mini-excavator as appropriate. These actions will improve the hydrological sheet flow and forest habitat of this area, maintain the connectivity of the trail system and enhance the wilderness character. Since this project occurs within a Potential Wilderness Addition, completion of the project could add 3.8 acres to the Yosemite Wilderness.

Actions common to Segments 1 and 2:

- 1) Assess project with History, Architecture, and Landscapes, Archeology and Anthropology and the Native American Indian Liaison regarding protection of the cultural resources;
- 2) Conduct a plant survey and generate a species list of the two project areas;
- 3) Implement short term photo point monitoring protocols;
- 4) Salvage any plants in repair areas. All salvaged plants will be replanted within half a day.

Actions unique to Segment 1, The Great Sierra Wagon Road:

- 1) Using a mini-excavator and /or hand tools, this project will repair drainage issues thereby protecting cultural, natural and wilderness resources in the immediate vicinity;
- 2) Place obstructions in the Great Sierra Wagon Road to create a more natural atmosphere and prevent vehicular traffic while maintaining the historical road prism.

Actions unique to Segment 2, Unmaintained road north of the Aspen Valley Junction to Pate Valley / Smith Meadow Junction.

- 1) Salvage plants currently growing on the berm and within the road using hand tools;
- 2) Push over up to 50 small trees (less than 10" Diameter Breast Height) growing on the berm which resulted from the road building activity using a mini-excavator. Trees will be used in project to naturalize the area;
- 3) Remove the berms from either side of the road leaving a 24 inch trail (using the equipment);
- 4) Replant salvaged plants after the berms are removed;
- 5) Decompact soil as needed using hand tools;
- 6) Place obstructions as needed to naturalize area using hand tools;
- 7) Seed the project area with locally gathered native seed;
- 8) Mulch with locally gathered materials.

Removing the unmaintained road berms and reducing the road to trail width will allow for a more natural flow of water, restoring the hydrologic function of the area. This will support a more natural progression of the native plant communities throughout the project area.

American Indian tribal consultation is scheduled prior to beginning any work. Comments and recommendations will be incorporated into the project.

The following park staff has been and will continue to be consulted:

- 1) Archeology and Anthropology staff is planning an onsite consultation to identify appropriate restoration measures to protect cultural resources.
- 2) History, Architecture and Landscapes staff is planning an onsite consultation to identify the modern items to be removed and identify appropriate restoration measures to protect cultural resources.
- 3) Trails Supervisor has concurred with the modification of this road to a trail.
- 4) Wilderness Protection staff have prepared the attached Minimum Requirement Analysis.

Mitigations

- Project areas will be surveyed prior to the work to determine that restoration activities will not damage sensitive species or cultural resources. Restoration techniques will be altered to protect those resources.
- All project equipment will be "weed free".
- Project area will be surveyed for weeds prior to the project and for three years after project completion.
- Crews will use Leave No Trace work methods.
- Crews will keep food secure from bears at all times.
- Crews will educate the public regarding the project. A public information sign will be at work site.
- Duff, soil, logs, and other materials moved onto the project area will be collected in a way that minimizes impacts on the local surroundings and protects the cultural, physical and aesthetic resources.
- Attempts will be made to avoid project work during the heavily visited summer months.
- All evidence of equipment will be raked out and naturalized.
- Staging Areas 3 and 4 will be obstructed, and duffed.

Project Location:

Mariposa County, CA

Mitigations:

- Ensure staging areas are on bare ground or in previously disturbed locations.
- Ensure that soil disturbance is kept to a minimum; salvage plants, save topsoil, and replace plants in order of removal.
- American Indian site visit is scheduled for Sept 7, 2010. Measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts developed as a result of the consultation will be implemented into the field operations/project execution, as appropriate.

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.4 Removal of non-historic materials and structures in order to restore natural conditions.

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 or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

Park Superintendent \\ Don L. Neubacher \\

Date 9/2/10



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 07/15/2010

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: **06/24/2010**

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: 2010-038 Harden Road Rewilding II
PEPC Project Number: 30950
Project Type: Resource Management Plan/Site Plan (RMP)
Project Location: County, State: Mariposa, California
Project Leader: Victoria Hartman

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.		Negligible			This project includes decompaction, removal of berms and recontouring of the old road. One half mile long by eight feet wide by no more than six inches deep.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality		Negligible			Some temporary air emissions are associated with the road removal.
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			Equipment will be used to abandon the road and maintain the trail.
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	No				

occupancy, income, values, ownership, type of use					
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				All equipment will be from the park fleet.
16. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	No				
17. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	No				
18. Archeological resources	No				
19. Prehistoric/historic structure	No				
20. Cultural landscapes	No				
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	No				
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		Mitigated; this project will return the road back into a trail.
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 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 13112)?		No		

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>
Don L. Neubacher	Superintendent
Kathleen Morse	Chief of Planning
Mark Butler	Chief of Project Management
Katariina Tuovinen	Chief of Administration Management
Ed Walls	Chief of Facilities Management
Niki Nicholas	Chief of Resources Management & Science
Marty Nielson	Chief of Business and Revenue Management
Tom Medema	Chief of Interpretation and Education
Charles Cuvelier	Chief of Visitor and Resource Protection Chief Ranger
Vicki Hartman	Project Leader
Elexis Mayer	Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Jeannette Simons	NHPA Specialist
Renea Kennec	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 Kennec //</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kennec	<u>8/31/10</u>
<u>// Sue Clark // -acting</u> Compliance Program Manager – Elexis Mayer	<u>9/1/10</u>
<u>// Mark A Butler //</u> Chief, Project Management – Mark Butler	<u>9/2/10</u>

Approved:

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Don L. Neubacher //</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>9/2/10</u>



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 07/15/2010

PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: July 15, 2010

PROJECT INFORMATION

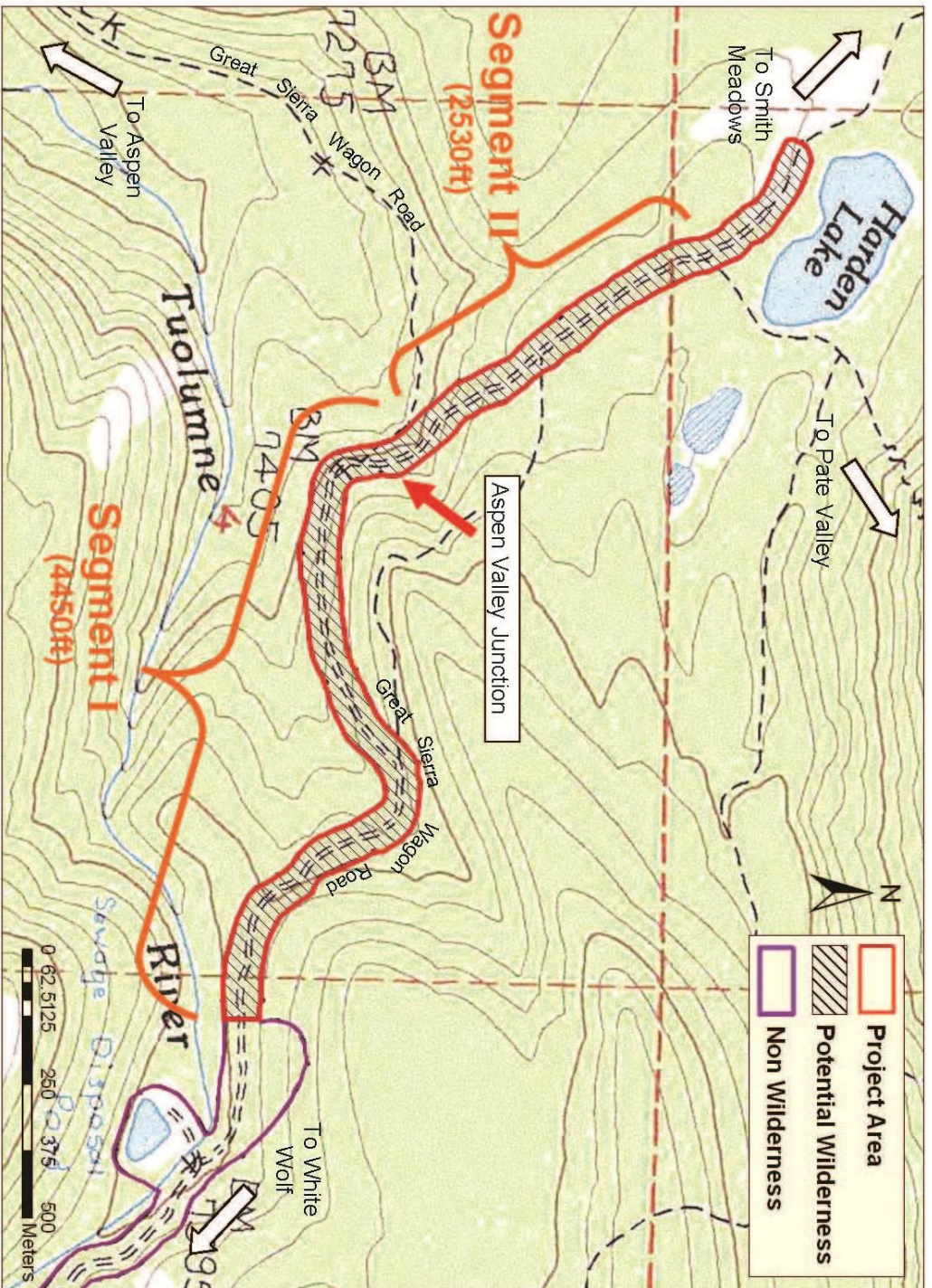
Park Name: Yosemite National Park
Project Title: 2010-038 Harden Road Rewilding II
PEPC Project Number: 30950
Project Type: Resource Management Plan/Site Plan (RMP)
Project Location: County, State: Mariposa County, California
Project Leader: Victoria Hartman

PARK ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES CHECKLIST				
1. Listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (Federal or State)?		X		
2. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		X		
3. Park rare plants or vegetation?		X		
4. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		X		
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
5. Entail ground disturbance?	X			This project includes decompaction, removal of berms and recontouring of the old road. One half mile long by eight feet wide by no more than six inches deep.
6. Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?		X		
7. Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?		X		
8. Has a National Register form been completed?		X		

9. Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		X		
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				
10. Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor?		X		
11. Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river?		X		
12. Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		X		
13. Remain consistent with its river segment classification?			X	
14. Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?		X		
15. Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and Scenic River corridor?		X		
16. Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		X		
17. Consistent with the provisions in the Merced River Plan Settlement Agreement?			X	
WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST				
18. Within designated Wilderness?	X			Minimum Requirement Analysis is attached.
19. Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		X		

Harden II

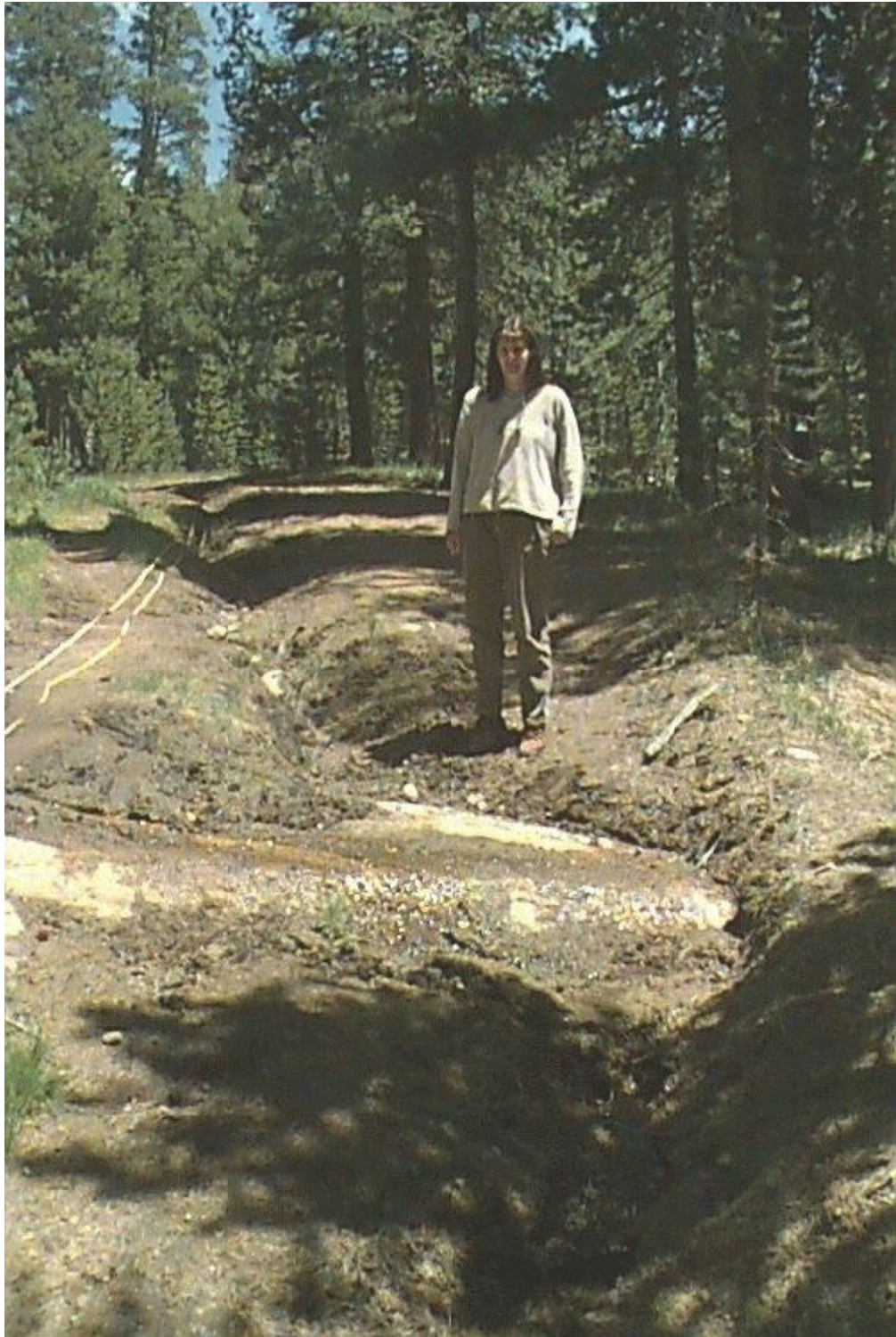




GREAT SIERRA WAGON ROAD
EROSION 1
PROJECT: HARDEN 2



GREAT SIERRA WAGON ROAD
EROSION 2
PROJECT: HARDEN 2



GREAT SIERRA WAGON ROAD
EROSION 3
PROJECT: Harden 2



STAGING AREA 1
PROJECT: HARDEN 2



Staging Area 2
Project: Harden 2



STAGING AREA 4
PROJECT: HARDEN 2



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 07/15/2010

ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. Park: Yosemite National Park **Park District:** Wilderness

2. Project Description:

a. Project Name: 2010-038 Harden Road Rewilding II

b. Date: July 15, 2010

c. PEPC Project ID Number: 30950

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

☒ No

☐ Yes, Source or reference:

☒ 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:

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

☒ Yes 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:** July 15, 2010 **Title:** Environmental Protection
Specialist **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: 05/07/2010
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: 05/14/2010
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

[X] Anthropologist

Name: Jeannette Simons

Date: 08/17/2010

Comments: American Indian Liaison. Site visit planned for September 7, 2010.

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: No adverse effect determination is contingent upon outcome of site visit, and implementation of tribal concerns into project execution, as appropriate.

[X] Historical Landscape Architect

Name: David Humphrey

Date: 05/13/2010

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)]

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: 1999 Programmatic Agreement

☐ 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 // Sue Clark // - acting

Date: 9/1/10

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 Superintendent // Don L. Neubacher //

Date: 9/2/10