



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 Roche, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2009-080 Falls Creek Gage Removal (26860)

The Leadership Team has reviewed the proposed project actions and completed its environmental assessment documentation, and we have determined that there:

- Will not be any effect on threatened, endangered, or rare species 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 proposed project, therefore, is now cleared for all NEPA and NHPA compliance requirements as presented above. Project plans and specifications are approved, and construction or project implementation can commence.

For the proposed project actions to be within compliance requirements during construction or project implementation, the following mitigations must be adhered to:

- Ensure consultation occurs with Hetch Hetchy Water and Power prior to beginning work.
- Contact the park liaison, Hetch Hetchy Program Manager, Jennifer Treutelaar, 372-0238.

//Charles Cuvelier// (acting)
Don L. Neubacher

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: 2009-080 Falls Creek Gage Removal (26860)

PEPC Project Number: 26860

Project Description: This project would remove the USGS Falls Creek Gage House, including the cableway and the debris associated with its operations. The two cableway anchors on either side of the river and the brass benchmark (the original site datum) would remain for use in future operations.

This project would also replace the gage house with a low-profile modern structure to monitor river flow and other parameters. It would be placed outside the river channel but within 20 feet of the original gage location. An instrument box (2 feet square by 10 inches deep) would be mounted to an approximately 7-foot-high metal post at three feet above the ground. A 12-inch by 17-inch solar panel and satellite antenna would be mounted on top of the metal post. Flexible 1-inch conduit would connect the structure to a 3-foot-long by 2-inch-diameter steel pipe mounted to the bedrock in the river. A helicopter or pack stock would be used to ferry equipment and debris to and from the site. Personnel would access the site on foot.

Project Location:

Mariposa, California

Mitigation(s):

- Ensure consultation occurs with Hetch Hetchy Water and Power prior to beginning work.
- Contact the park liaison, Hetch Hetchy Program Manager, Jennifer Treutelaar (372-0238).

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.5 Installation of signs, displays, kiosks, etc.

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 //Charles Cuvelier// (acting)

Date 6/16/10

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

DO-12 APPENDIX 1

Date Form Initiated: 6/02/2010

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: 2010-080 Falls Creek Gage Removal
PEPC Project Number: 26860
Project Type: Facility replacement (Other)
Project Location: **County, State:** Tuolumne, California District, Section: CA19,
Project Leader: Jim Roche

Preliminary drawings attached? Yes

Is project a hot topic? (Controversial or sensitive issues that should be brought to attention of Regional Director) No

C. 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			The new gage would be mounted to rock in the creek bed and the solar panel would be mounted to rock several feet away.
2. From geohazards	No				
3. Air quality		Negligible			Temporary dust would be created from the helicopter.
4. Soundscapes		Negligible			Helicopter use would temporarily have an impact on the immediate area. Use includes 2 to 3 flights per day for two or three days.
5. Water quality or quantity	No				
6. Streamflow characteristics	No				
7. Marine or estuarine resources	No				
8. Floodplains or wetlands	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
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				
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				

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
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				

D. 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		
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		

Mandatory Criteria: If implemented, would the proposal:	Yes	No	N/A	Comment or Data Needed to Determine
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 National Park Service, 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 Department of Interior exception for actions that threaten to violate a federal law for protection of the environment.

E. 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

Did you make a diligent effort to contact them? N/A

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
Jim Roche	Project Leader
Elexis Mayer	Environmental Planning and Compliance Program Manager
Jeannette Simons	NHPA Specialist
Renea Kennec	NEPA Specialist

F. SUPERVISORY SIGNATORY

Recommended:

Compliance Specialists	Date
<u>//Renea Kennec//</u> Compliance Specialist – Renea Kennec	<u>6/8/10</u>
<u>//Elexis Mayer//</u> Compliance Program Manager – Elexis Mayer	<u>6/9/10</u>
<u>//Mark A. Butler//</u> Chief, Project Management – Mark Butler	<u>6/11/10</u>

Approved:

Superintendent	Date
<u>//Charles Cuvelier// (acting)</u> Don L. Neubacher	<u>6/16/10</u>

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park
Date: 6/02/2010

PARK ESF ADDENDUM

Today's Date: June 2, 2010

PROJECT INFORMATION

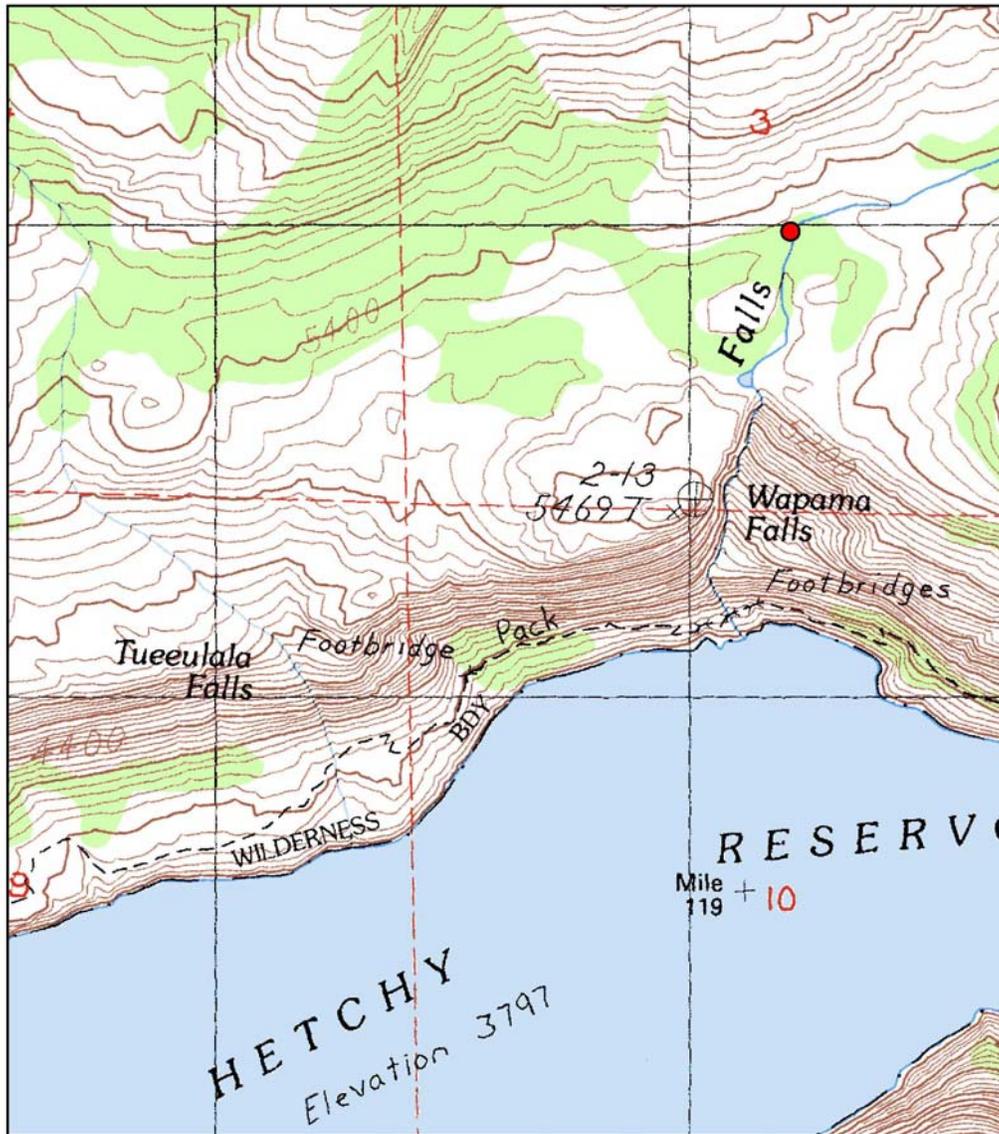
Park Name: Yosemite National Park
Project Title: 2010-080 Falls Creek Gage Removal
PEPC Project Number: 26860
Project Type: Facility replacement (Other)
Project Location: County, State: Tuolumne, California District, Section: CA19,
Project Leader: Jim Roche

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)?		No		
2. Species of special concern (Federal or State)?		No		
3. Park rare plants or vegetation?		No		
4. Potential habitat for any special-status species listed above?		No		
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT CHECKLIST				
5. Entail ground disturbance?		No		
6. Are any archeological or ethnographic sites located within the area of potential effect?		No		
7. Entail alteration of a historic structure or cultural landscape?	Yes			The current gage house was built in 1916 but was determined not to be historically significant by the park Historic Architect.
8. Has a National Register form been completed?		No		

ESF Addendum Questions	Yes	No	N/A	Data Needed to Determine/Notes
9. Are there any structures on the park's List of Classified Structures in the area of potential effect?		No		
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT CHECKLIST				
10. Fall within a wild and scenic river corridor? (Name the river corridor)		No		
11. Fall within the bed and banks AND will affect the free-flow of the river?		No		
12. Have the possibility of affecting water quality of the area?		No		
13. Remain consistent with its river segment classification?	Yes			
14. Fall on a tributary of a Wild and Scenic River?	Yes			Falls Creek flows into Hetch Hetchy.
15. Will the project encroach or intrude upon the Wild and Scenic River corridor?		No		
16. Will the project unreasonably diminish scenic, recreational, or fish and wildlife values?		No		
17. Consistent with the provisions in the Merced River Plan Settlement Agreement?			N/A	
WILDERNESS ACT CHECKLIST				
18. Within designated Wilderness?	Yes			Minimum Requirement Analysis has been prepared.
19. Within a Potential Wilderness Addition?		No		

Location Map: Falls Creek Gage Removal



Falls Creek Gage Removal: Site photos

Photo 1. Gagehouse from southeast. Falls Creek flows from right to left in this view. Note missing sections of foundation.



Photo 2. View of gagehouse from south. River is not flowing in this December 6, 2007 photo.



Photo 3. View of gagehouse from Southwest.



Photo 4. View of cableway and old cablecar.



Photo 6. Brass site datum. To be left in place to facilitate future gaging at the site.





ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park Park district: CA19

2. Project Description:

a. **Project Name:** 2010-080 Falls Creek Gage Removal

b. **Date:** June 2, 2010

c. **PEPC Project ID Number:** 26860

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 Resource(s):

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

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

Replace historic features/elements in kind

Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure

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

Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible

Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible

Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources

Begin or contribute to deterioration of historic features, terrain, setting, landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources

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:** June 2, 2010

Title: Environmental Planning 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: 10/13/2009

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: 9/14/2009
Comments: Gauge house appears to be more than 50 years old but lacks historic significance. Cableway appears to be relatively modern.

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 Landscape Architect
Name: David Humphrey
Date: 9/14/2009

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: _____

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 //Elaxis Mayer// (acting)

Date: 6/9/10

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 //Charles Cuvelier// (acting)

Date: 6/16/10

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