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APR 13 2006
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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

[redacted]
[redacted]>
03/29/2006 11:05 AM
PST

To: yosemite <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: public scoping Hodgon meadow

perintendent, Yosemite national Park
Public Scoping
Hodgdon Meadow Trailer replacement Project
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

March 29, 2006

Dear Sir:
The site visit with your staff at Hodgdon Meadow on March 26th was helpful in determining the most appropriate location for replacement housing in a resource sensitive area of YNP.

Points to consider:

1. First, most important, and not germane to this specific issue is the historical decision to site employee housing and maintenance facilities this close to a highly scenic, resource sensitive and valuable wetland. The entire development should be relocated away from this site.

2. Removing trailers and modular housing units and replacing them with appropriate architecturally designed structures should be emphasized here and throughout the NP system. It's a laudable goal and should be aggressively pursued.

3. Other trailer units at Hodgdon should be removed and relocated away from their existing site, and replaced if necessary with architecturally designed structures.

4. NPS staff suggested three alternative sites for this current project. Site A the original location of the obsolete trailers is the least objectionable providing that the replacement can be accomplished without removing one or both nearby large diameter yellow pines. Site B is to close to and within site of the meadow and should be rejected. The four Mission 66 housing units below site B along the meadow should be scheduled for removal as soon as possible. Strongly recommend removing existing chain link fence now. Site C would required major grading and tree cutting and should not be considered for this proposal at this time. This site could be considered for relocating existing Mission 66 housing along the meadow in a future effort to mitigate impacts in the Hodgdon Meadow area.

Thanks for Listening, [redacted]n El Dorado

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Mr. Tollefson,

I am truly sorry for the current state of "planning" in the park. The huge bureaucracy, including the courts, of the planning process has been a quagmire since the first campgrounds were wiped out by, not the flood, but by overzealous, anti camper extremists (I was up there within weeks of the flood and a simple sweeping of the access would have had the River sites reopened . Not a site has been replaced. This has become, like government planners I deal with everywhere, an industry there to serve itself. Completed plans do appear with comments having little effect. "Where there is a will, there can be a planning process." The "Process," exists so that there is no one to blame but that Process, and it has reduced everyone's ability to visit Yosemite.

As the Process moves ahead, Tuolumne will is fast becoming the next target. Campsites will be eliminated, due to "impacts" but the Yosemite Institute will gain space for research and, of course, camping for the Enviro Elite. I am not that old, 50, and I was a practical environmentalist at a very early age way before it was fashionable to be so. We got things done. You all are still trying to get a Valley plan in place after too many years. The reason it is taking so long is that the plan started way too big and upset too many people, it was in fact a simple "land grab." This cannot be undone except, as you well know, in a court of law.

I have been to several "scoping" meetings (what ever scoping means) and have seen no change in outcomes as a result of public meetings as the "process" is held hostage by environmental law (another good excuse for not response). Have you ever had a meeting in Stockton, Manteca or Tracy?

And by the way, why is anyone even considering building anything but dormitory type buildings at Hodgdon Meadow? Why is it necessary for two people to have separate living quarters? Are these administrators or Yosemite Institute people? Why not tear all the small housing units down and either remove them completely or make them a hostel style housing unit with a smaller foot print, including bunks????? A DUPLEX???? For TWO PEOPLE? You call your selves environmentalists? Ridiculous! Employees and volunteers used to live in tents and share facilities and work for some food and a place to put up their tent????? This approach should be considered everywhere in and out of the Park, Crane Flat is a perfect candidate for this idea also.

I hope this letter is not junk mailed.

I am sincerely a Yosemite person having climbed most of the big walls and hiked hundreds of miles of trails in the park, picking up garbage all the way.

[redacted]

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

to NPS,
I support the concept of building a duplex for park employees in the Hodgdon Meadow housing area.
Your words on the type of design, i.e., energy-efficient, bear-proof, and affordable to maintain sound like a true design style that such liveable structures in Yosemite park should have.
I tip my hat towards a noble attempt such as yours. Providing good housing for workers is such a solid, positive choice in housing, that I will always support such ideas that benefit the work force.
thank you,
[redacted]

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04/13/2006 07:36 PM
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To:
cc: "Laura Whitehouse" <LWHITEHOUSE@NPCA.ORG>, "Ron Sundergill" <RSUNDERGILL@NPCA.ORG>, <YOSE_planning@nps.gov>
Subject: Attn: Hodgdon Meadow Trailer Replacement Project

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

April 13, 2006

Michael Tollefson
Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA. 95389

Attn: Hodgdon Meadow Trailer Replacement Project

Dear Mr. Tollefson,

This letter is in response to your public comment period for the Hodgdon Meadow Trailer Replacement Project.

The National Parks Conservation Association is America's only private, non-profit advocacy organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving and enhancing the National Park System. NPCA was founded in 1919 and has more than 300,000 members and supporters.

After careful review of three relocation possibilities for the replacement duplex in Hodgdon Meadow, we find "Alternative A" as the most desirable. This alternative will restore lost employee housing accommodations, while requiring the least amount invasive efforts to the area. With that said, we have serious concerns with the construction of Alternative A and the other proposed duplex locations that we elaborate on below.

1. SOIL EXCAVATION
All preparatory efforts should be minimally invasive to the area in terms of excavation

For example:
Of the three alternatives listed on the Hodgdon Meadow site plan, Alternatives "B" and "C" would require a fair amount of soil excavation to adequately prepare for the building foundation. Alternative A is fairly flat and will require the least amount of excavation or leveling, if any. The only major preparatory effort at Alternative A will be removing the existing foundation slab from the previous structure—pending whether the final plan calls for an entirely new foundation.

Suggestion:
The final location should be the least invasive to the environment. It is highly recommended that Alternatives B and C be further investigated for any effects soil excavation may have on surrounding ecosystems and habitats (e.g.: tree root systems, natural drainage patterns, etc). Also, since Alternative C is located on somewhat of a slope, it should be investigated whether any type of erosion patterns may effect the long-term stability of this structure's foundation.

2. TREE REMOVAL
The new duplex location should—at all costs—avoid any unnecessary tree removal; yet adequately prepare the area to evade damage caused by nearby trees.

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For example:
In evaluating each possible duplex location, Alternative A has some large trees that are in close proximity of the proposed dimensions for the new structure. Without being able to properly estimate the exact location and dimensions of the new duplex in relation to those trees, we hesitate in fully endorsing Alternative A without knowing whether these large trees would need to be removed. Alternative B is slightly more ideal, as less large trees are in the proximity of the building site.

Suggestion: Obviously, it is recommended that due care be taken in evaluating trees for removal. While it is necessary to secure the long-term safety for the new duplex, unnecessary tree removal is of great concern—for habitat, ecosystem, and aesthetic reasoning.

3. REASONABLE RESIDENTIAL PROXIMITY
Replace the former trailer without expanding the residential area.

For example:
The purpose of the project is to simply restore housing accommodations lost by the removal of the obsolete trailer several years ago. This is not a residential expansion project. Therefore Alternatives A and B are more ideal as they fall within the pre-existing boundaries of the Hodgdon Meadows residential and administrative facilities. Alternative C would technically expand the residential area several feet toward the northwest.

Suggestion: Utilize land that is technically already in use. Unless the plan were to call for a large housing "expansion," we do not find it necessary to excavate land that has been previously untouched—or lies outside of the natural boundaries of the current residential area. Therefore, we suggest avoiding Alternative C.

Thank you, Mr. Tollefson, and the staff and management of the National Park Service for the opportunity to comment on this planning process. Please feel free to contact our organization with any questions.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
[redacted]
National Parks Conservation Association
[redacted]
Fresno, CA. 93710
Ph. (559) 229-9343
Fx. (559) 229-9349

NPCA - Hodgdon Meadow Trailer Comment - 4.13.06.doc

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

[redacted]2 San Francisco, CA 94117.

Please keep me informed about all planning in Yosemite.

I would like these new buildings to be as green as possible. Things like solar power are a must. Auto use must be dicouraged by moving parking away (far) from these buildings and providing walking, transit and bicycle ammenities. People who do not own an auto should not have to pay for parking and get reduced rent. Native plants should be used to landscape. Child friendly. Thank you.

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

[redacted]
04/14/2006 11:22 PM
MST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc: [redacted]
Subject: Hodgdon Meadow Trailer Replacement Project

The following scoping comments on the Hodgdon Meadow Trailer Replacement Project are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee:

The NPS fact sheet for this project states that the 1980 GMP and housing inventory has identified Hodgdon Meadow as an "appropriate" housing area for park employees; however, we wonder why NPS is moving ahead with implementing this plan for employee housing when their rationale may not be up-to-date. Even though there is a surprising amount of housing at Hodgdon currently, it is hard to overlook that this unique meadow already has substantial development nearby; and the ponderosa and sugar pines in the area are remarkable.

What is the availability of water and its connection to the meadow ecosystem here? Could there be a fen component to this meadow, like others in the park, such as Crane Flat? What type of sewage system is used currently at Hodgdon Meadow and how would additional homes impact this system?

It should not be overlooked that Hodgdon Meadow is one of about ten locations where great gray owls have been known to reproduce in the last 12 years (1994 being the last known year, although, unfortunately, no surveys were conducted there from 1995-2003). In 2005 a female spent about two weeks there in April, and in the previous year there was no sign of them, although surveys were started late—in July. Hodgdon is likely an important staging ground for upslope migration of great gray owls Based on elevation (4500-5000 feet) it seems there is also potential habitat here for spotted owls There are also recent willow flycatcher sightings in Hodgdon; this lower elevation meadowwillow habitat is unique.

If the housing inventory is updated and it is still determined that it is appropriate to build additional employee housing at Hodgdon; then, based on our site visit with park staff last month, it seems site "A" should be selected over sites "B" and "C". Site "A" is within an already developed triangle of homes and it is also where the former trailers were; however, site "A" has a few very large ponderosa pines and park staff mentioned that one was "old" and would most certainly need to be taken out We would like to know more about this determination of this particular tree; the needles looked healthy and it did not appear to be leaning. Building on sites "B" and "C" would pose major problems for us because this would extend the development footprint at Hodgdon, in general, and spread more development away from the current buildings. Building on site "C" could spread the development towards the campground and could, down the line, create further justification for inappropriate development Site "B" is too close to the meadow as well as close to a significant sugar pine located at the end of an existing parking strip

At all of these sites it was evident last month that snow removal is a major issue for yearround residents, as there was a lot of snow piled up in driveways and front yards Park staff explained to us that at least one side of the proposed duplex would need to be handicap accessible It was mentioned that a paved semi-circular driveway would be ideal for access and snow plowing ease, therefore this additional paving needs to be considered and clarified beyond the footprint of the proposed duplex itself before the project gets to the design stage.

Thank you very much for considering our comments.

[redacted]
Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

[redacted]

04/13/2006 09:02 PM
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To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Hogden Meadow Trailer

Dear Superintendent;
If this project is necessary to fulfill the long term goals of the park ,which I assume it is since you are proposing it,then I believe you should spend as little time, energy and money as possible evaluating it over and over. There were trailers at that location previously , its in a housing area, and a permanent structure is most functional and cost effective. Lets move forward with this and put our energies into the big issues ahead.
Just returned from YOSEMITE and was very excited to see all the activity/improvements in progress.
Great job,thanks for all your had work and perserverance!
[redacted]

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04/14/2006 11:37 PM
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To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Hodgdon housing proposal

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

14 April 2006

Sierra Club
[redacted]
Fresno, CA 93755

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park

Sir:

This is being emailed to <yose_planning@nps.gov>.

These comments are being submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club, and are in addition to those just submitted for the Sierra Club by [redacted] (Technical problems have prevented adequate coordination in our producing the Sierra Club comments.) Both sets of comments should be considered together.

First, most important, is the historical decision to site employee housing and maintenance facilities this close to a highly scenic, resource sensitive and valuable wetland. The entire development probably should be relocated away from this site.

We question the validity of using the 1980 General Management Plan as a justification for proceeding with development in the Hodgdon area. The 1980 Plan has been thoroughly eviscerated by subsequent planning processes, and is now just a shell of its former self. It is highly inappropriate to use it as a "cover" for development, while the preservation and restoration elements of it continue to be ignored or have been amended out of it.

Even if the 1980 Plan had not been mutilated through subsequent Park Service actions, the fact remains that the GMP is 26 years old, and new information needs to be taken into account.

Hodgdon is one of about ten locations where Great Grey owls have been known to reproduce within the last 12 years (1994 being the last known year, although no surveys were conducted there from 1995-2003). In 2005 a female spent about two weeks there in April, and in the previous year no sign of them was found, although surveys were started late (in July). Hodgdon is likely an important staging ground for upslope migration of Great Grey owls; they move up and down slope when the snow is heavy and hard to hunt through. There are also recent willow flycatcher sightings in Hodgdon; lower elevation (4,500 - 5,000 feet) meadow/willow habitat is unique.

Considering how new information is bringing into question the impact which existing uses are having on the Crane Flat ecosystem, we wonder whether similar questions need to be raised at Hodgdon. Is the water supply known to have no detrimental effect on the meadow system? Is it known whether there is a fen component to the Hodgdon meadow system?

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There still are some exceptionally impressive trees in the Hodgdon area, even though some were cut in recent years to make way for existing development. You will recall that there was significant public outcry over the cutting of specimen trees at that time. There should be no further cutting of specimen trees to make way for a development which would be based on an outdated plan.

The future of the Hodgdon area needs to be reassessed through a new planning process, with full NEPA compliance. No existing plan provides legitimacy for what you are proposing.

[redacted]
Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee