



United States Department of the Interior

OCT 16 1978 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WESTERN REGION
450 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE, BOX 36063
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30
(WR)RC

OCT 13 1978

Administration	J. P. 1/1/77
Concessions Mgmt.	
Management Asst.	
Asst. Supt. VEGM	10-17
Chief Ranger	
Chief Insp.	10/25
Research Scientist	
Ch. Res. Mgmt.	
Safety Mgr.	
Asst. Supt. Area Oper.	
Rec'dy Spec.	
Ch. Maint. Equip.	

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Yosemite
General Superintendent, Southern Arizona Group
Superintendent, Organ Pipe Cactus

From: **ACTING**
Regional Director, Western Region

Subject: Entry of properties on the National Register of Historic Places

Enclosed are copies of the correspondence and forms for the following properties which have been added to the National Register of Historic

Places in your areas:

✓ Yosemite

Great Sierra Wagon Road

Organ Pipe Cactus

Victoria Mine
Milton Mine
Bull Pasture

Enclosures

cc:
DSC(TWE)-Ms. Hart, w/c enc. (YOSE)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	8/25/78

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Great Sierra Wagon Road

AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N/A

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Yosemite National Park

VICINITY OF Aspen Valley

14th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

California

06

Tuolumne

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

National Park Service

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Ave., P.O. Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

CA

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yosemite National Park/ Roads and Trails Office

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 577

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

STATE

CA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The section of the Great Sierra Wagon Road that is described in this nomination is the most pristine of the few remaining sections of the road, known commonly as the Old Tioga road. This stretch still contains the fine drywall masonry retaining walls and culverts built by the Chinese laborers. Other sections of the road up to Tuolumne Meadows are used as access roads into campgrounds and are much more heavily traveled and impacted, than this section.

The Great Sierra Wagon Road travels in a generally northeasterly direction for 17-3/4 miles from the western boundary of Yosemite National Park to where it approaches the White Wolf Campground. The westernmost 3-3/4 miles of the road are paved. Two and a quarter miles beyond where the pavement ends, the road passes along the southern edge of Aspen Valley, site of one of the last three private inholdings in Yosemite, and a popular resort before the road was realigned in 1937.

The road then enters a densely forested section, following a tributary of the south fork of the Tuolumne River, up to the Hardin Lake Campground spur. This past section of road is extremely narrow in places and required the construction of the many drywall masonry retaining walls, known locally as the "Chinese walls." today's vehicle standards it is strictly a one-lane road to this point. The east cover opens up somewhat for the short distance to the White Wolf Campground where pavement begins.

The section of road from Aspen Valley to the White Wolf Campground is closed to all but National Park Service vehicular use as a fire road. The section between the western boundary and Aspen Valley is open as an access route to property owners in the area.

The handcrafted retaining walls and culverts benefit from the lack of vehicles on this road. They are the prime value and should probably be recorded, through photographs and drawings, as a method of preservation. This portion of the Great Sierra Wagon Road is in a potential wilderness area of Yosemite National Park. Options for the road would be either an enclave along its boundaries or, more realistically, the abandonment of the road to natural processes as maintenance would be inappropriate to the wilderness definition.

B SIGNIFICANCE

JD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1882, 1915

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Co.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Great Sierra Wagon Road is of local significance in engineering, industry, and transportation. The first category relates primarily to the relatively unaltered retaining walls (see description), and the additional categories were determined because of the road's associative history with silver mining efforts in the region and the "opening up" of Yosemite's spectacular high country to the public. The Great Sierra Wagon Road was constructed in 1882 by the Great Sierra Silver Mining Company for the purpose of transporting supplies to their mine on the summit of Tioga Hill (located on the northeast boundary of the park). The road was skillfully laid out by surveyors H. B. Carpenter and H. P. Medlicott and built under the direction of engineer Charles N. Barney. The construction was unusually permanent for a mountain road with stone abutted bridges and retaining walls built never the least necessity dictated. Chinese laborers were used to a large extent and paid the impressive sum of \$1.20 a day; Caucasians received \$1.50 and the foreman \$2.00 per day. According to one report, there were 90 whites and 250 Chinese; another alludes to 160 Chinese out of 250 laborers. In any event, the road, reaching a total length of 56¼ miles, was completed in 130 days, for a total cost of \$61,095.22 - about \$1100 per mile.

The road had barely reached completion when the Great Sierra Mine proved a losing venture and was abandoned. Use of the wagon road stopped except for a few intrepid travelers. The road remained in a state of neglect for over 30 years, while still in private hands. The Government could not meet the price being asked although the Army began agitating to acquire the route shortly after the establishment of the national park. The importance of the road was recognized for some time, not only as a means of establishing a new route across the Sierra Nevada and opening up the northern part of the Yosemite region, but, with the advent of the automobile, it was seen as a link in transcontinental travel. In 1915 the road was acquired by Stephen T. Mather, future first Director of the National Park Service, and deeded over to the Government. In July of that same year, through the cooperation of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the State of California's Department of Engineering, the "highway" was opened to motor car travel.

In 1937 the section of road from the western boundary to White Wolf Lodge was realigned, bypassing Aspen Valley for a two-lane paved road via Crane Flat, on the Big Oak Flat Road. Except for the section leading to the private homes in Aspen Valley, this section of the original Great Sierra Wagon Road remains actively unchanged from its earliest days.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hubbard, Douglass. Ghost Mines of Yosemite, Fresno, Awani Press, c.1958.
 Trexler, Kieth, The Tioga Road, Yosemite Nature Notes, special edition.1961.
 Ditton, Richard. Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park Yosemite Nature Notes v.35:6, June 1956.
 DeDecker, Mary. Minés of the Eastern Sierra, Glendale CA. La Siesta Press, 1966.
 Whedon, Hazel. A History of the Roads, Trails, etc. in and near Yosemite Nat'l Park.
 unpublished M.A thesis, 1934 University of Southern California.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A

UTM REFERENCES

A	111	249650	41190300	B	111	252950	41189880
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	111	254875	41188300	D	111	2557660	41188910

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The road is described in the description section: the UTM references were determined with a buffer of 25 ft. out from the crown of the road on either side.

(UTM points continued on additional sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Leslie Starr Hart/Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Denver Service Center/National Park Service

8/76

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

655 Parfet, P.O. Box 25287

(303) 234-4509

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Denver

Co. 80225

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ___ NO ___ NONE ___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___ National ___ State ___ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

TEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

1 1 1

CONTINUATION SHEET Great Sierra
Wagon Road WTM'S ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1.

- E 11/255310/4189575
- F 11/257700/4192445
- G 11/258030/4192570
- H 11/261225/4193775
- I 11/265025/4196790
- J 11/267400/4196775
- K 11/267030/4193175
- L 11/266500/4192180
- M 11/266275/4196110
- N 11/265025/4196175
- O 11/261460/4193200
- P 11/258000/4192000
- Q 11/256025/4189425
- R 11/256435/4188750
- S 11/254825/4187500
- T 11/252775/4189300
- U 11/249625/4189610

1 1 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Great Sierra Wagon Road

AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

— VICINITY OF

Aspen Valley

COUNTY

Tuolumne

STATE

CA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Dean Shenk
National Park Service

DATE OF PHOTO 10/75

NEGATIVE FILED AT

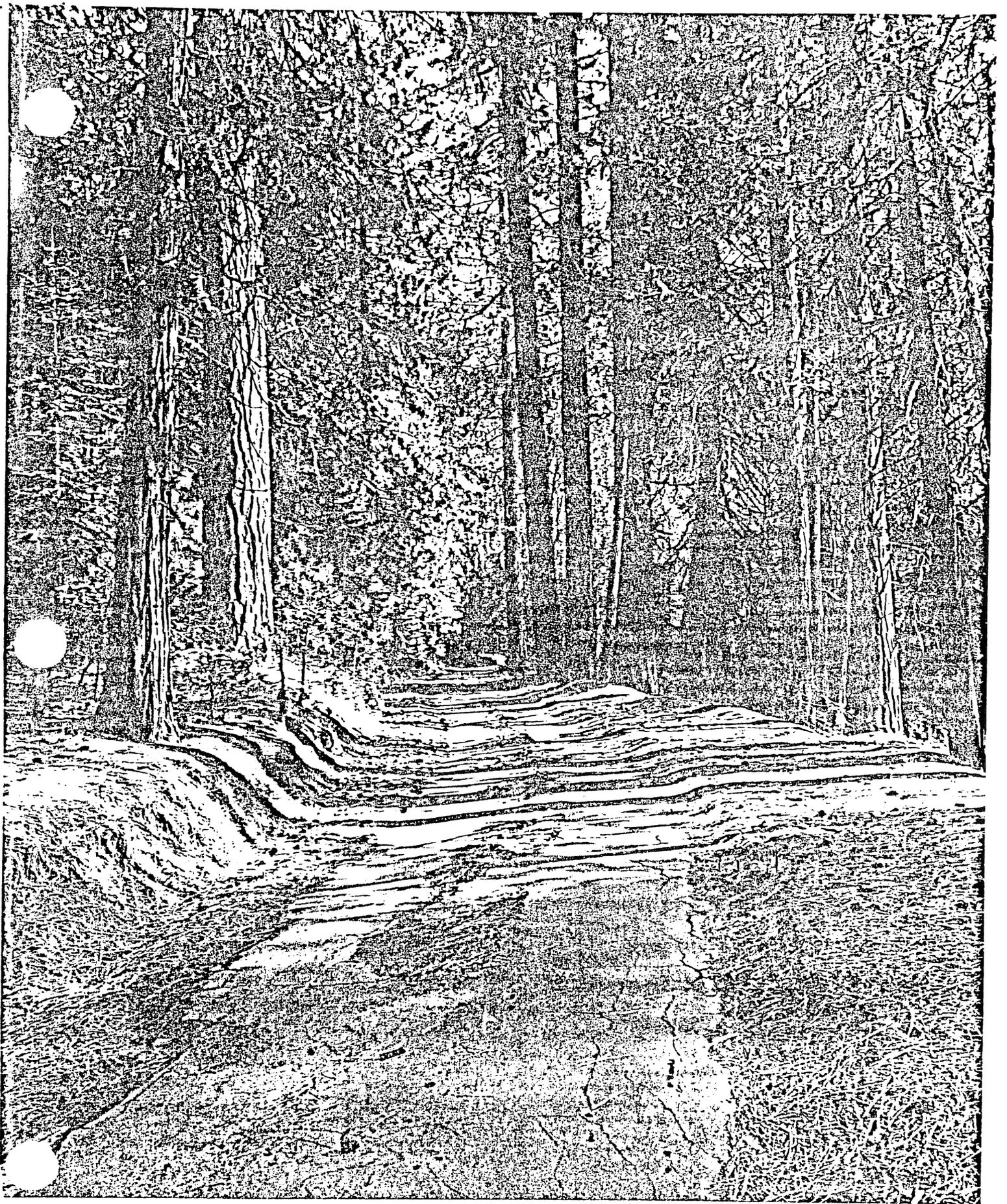
Western Regional Office/NPS/450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063, San Francisco, CA

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 1

W to Northeast of paved section of Great Sierra Wagon road 3 1/2 miles
East of the Park boundary heading for Aspen Valley.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

STATE

Yosemite National Park

Aspen Valley

Tuolumne

CA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Dean Shenk

DATE OF PHOTO

10/75

National Park Service

NEGATIVE FILED AT

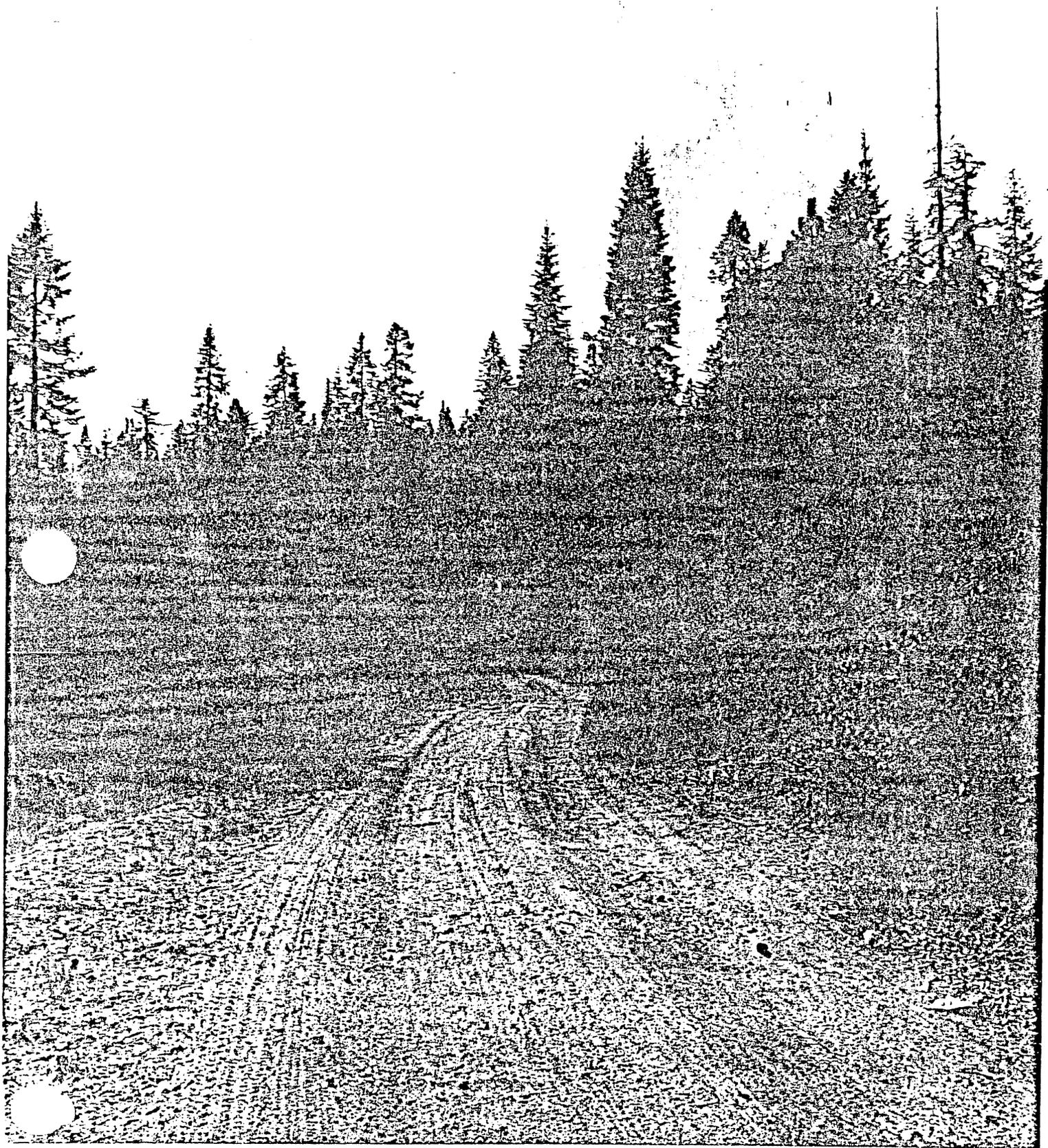
Western Regional Office/NPS/450 Golden Gate Ave, Box 36063/San Francisco, CA

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 2

View of road section, south of Aspen Valley-view to south. Gives idea of the terrain before entering the forested sections.



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Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

VICINITY OF

Aspen Valley

COUNTY

Tuolumne

STATE

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3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Dean Shenk
National Park Service

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NEGATIVE FILED AT

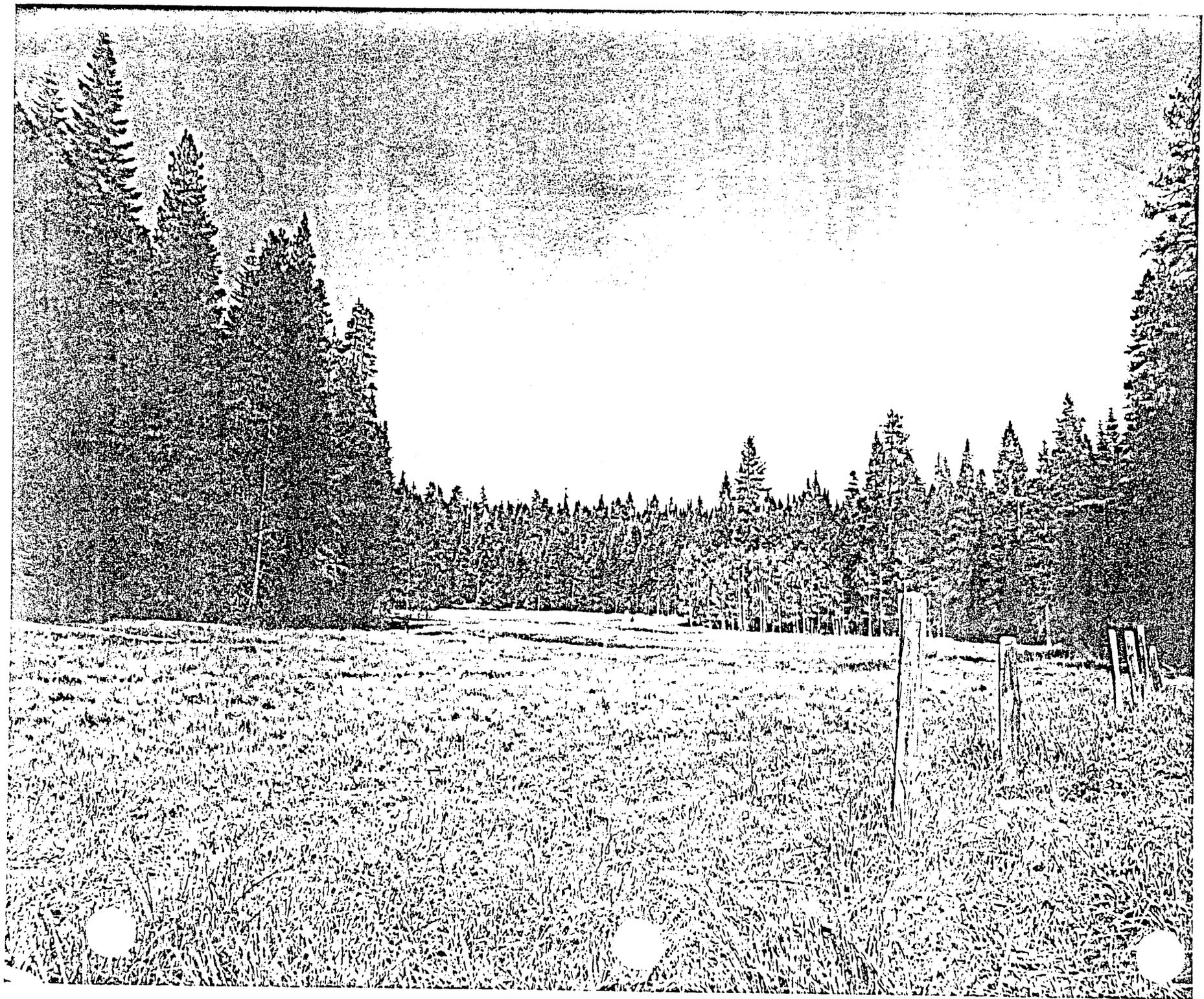
Western Regional Office/NPS/450 Golden Gate Ave, Box 36063/San Francisco, CA

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 3.

View to North across Aspen Valley. Great Sierra Wagon Road is behind photographer.



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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1

NAME

HISTORIC

Great Sierra Wagon Road

AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2

LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

STATE

Yosemite National Park

Aspen Valley

Tuolumne

CA

3

PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Dean Shenk
National Park Service

DATE OF PHOTO 10/75

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Western Regional Office/NPS/450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063, San Francisco, CA

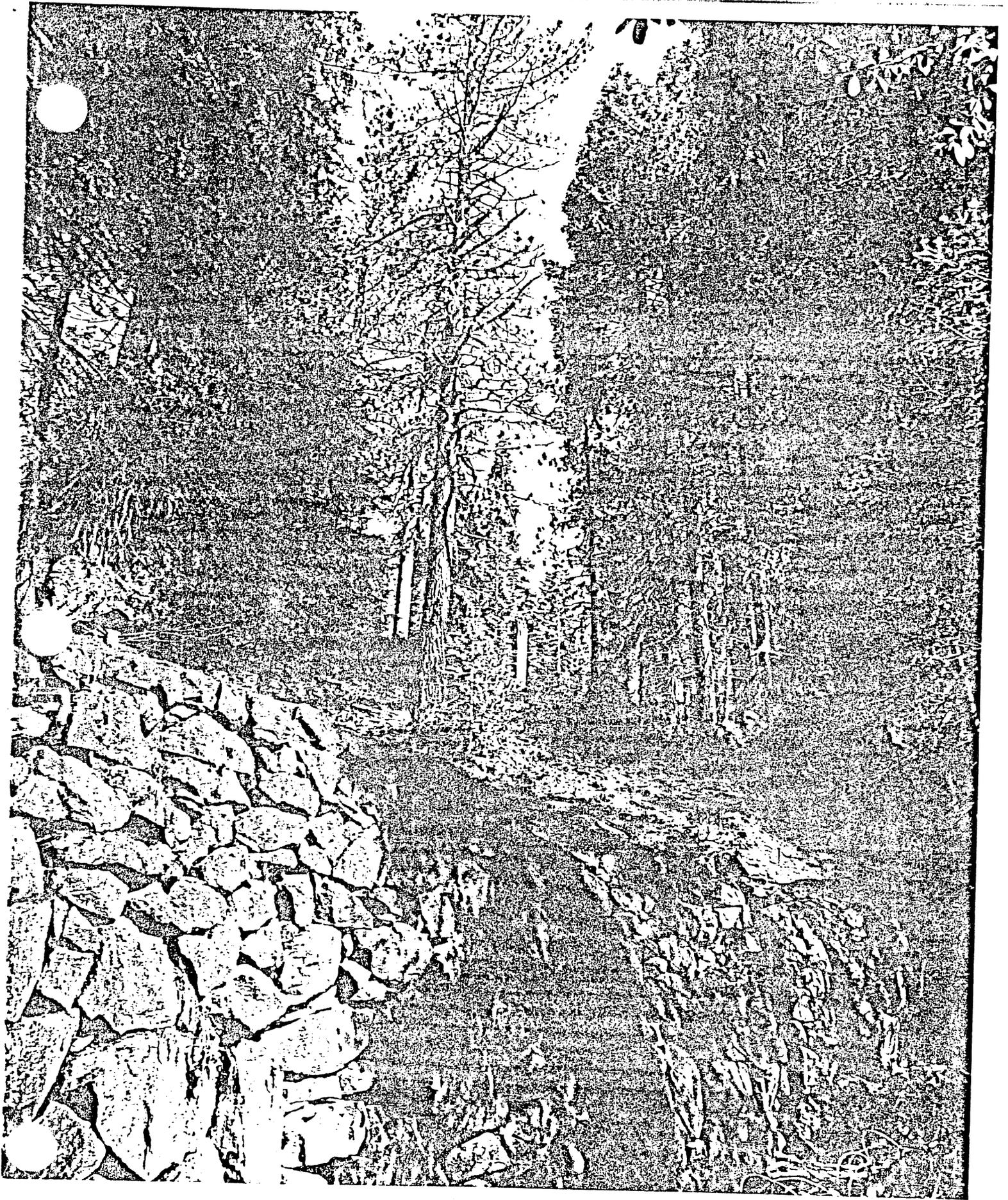
4

IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 4

Section of dry wall construction of south edge of the Great Sierra Wagon Road about 3 mile east of Aspen Valley.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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HISTORIC

Great Sierra Wagon Road

AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

X VICINITY OF

Aspen Valley

COUNTY

Tuolumne

STATE

CA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Dean Shenk

DATE OF PHOTO 10/75

National Park Service

NEGATIVE FILED AT

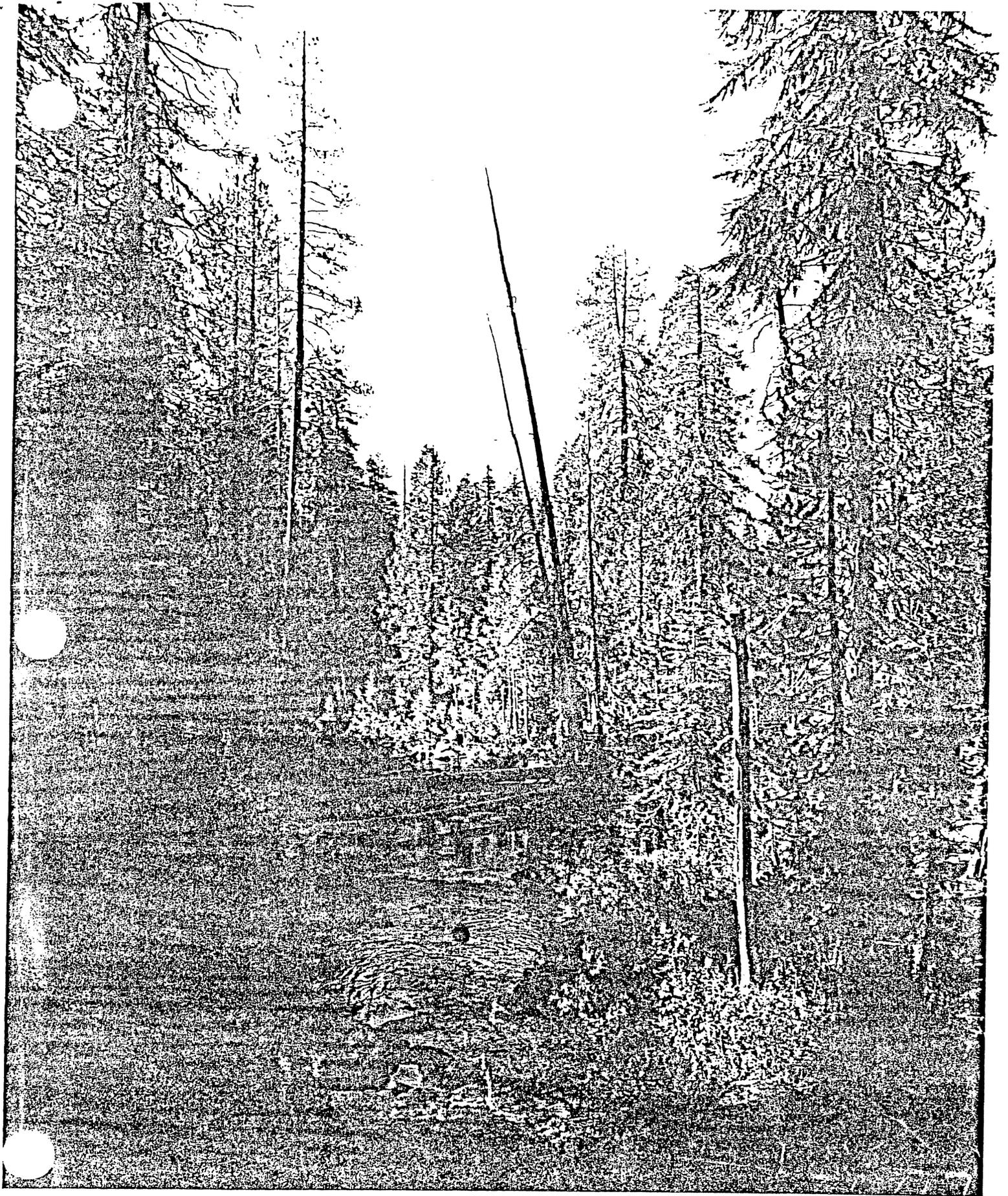
Western Regional Office/NPS/450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063/San Francisco, CA

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 5

Crossing the tributary of the Tuolumne River 5 miles east of Aspen Valley.
View to west (downstream)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Great Sierra Wagon Road

AND/OR COMMON

Aspen Valley Road

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

____VICINITY OF

COUNTY

STATE

Yosemite National Park

Aspen Valley

Tuolumne

CA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U.S.G.S.

SCALE 1:62500

DATE 1956.

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

[177] From: Laura Laird at NP-YOSE 10/12/95 10:50AM (43857 bytes: 21 ln, 2 fl)
To: Pam Griggs at NP-DSC
cc: Sylvia Rose Augustus
Subject; Re: Determination of eligibility for Great Sierra Wagon Road, etc
----- Message Contents -----

Text item 1:

Jerry,

Attached is a copy of the letter we are sending the SHPO on the wagon road and the Dana Fork intake weir. The determination of eligibility report is also attached (the significance section was revised slightly).

The Tuolumne River bridge on the modern Tioga Road was evaluated in 1992 by DSC Historian Harlan Unrau and found ineligible. The SHPO concurred with this determination so no further Section 106 compliance is needed for work involving the bridge (installation of water and sewer lines).

Call me if you have questions at (303) 969-2270.

Thanks.

- Pam

Pam - thanks for all your assistance on this project. I realize it was a short-notice, short-funded job. Can we get a copy of the Tioga Road bridge evaluation and SHPO concurrence letter? Many thanks. Laura.

File item 2: WAGON.LTR 10/11/95 5:09PM

File item 3: TIOGARD.DOE 10/10/95 5:07PM

[176] From: Pam Griggs at NP-DSC 10/11/95 5:23PM (43640 bytes: 16 ln, 2 fl)
To: Jerry Mitchell at NP-YOSE
Receipt Requested
cc: Sylvia Rose Augustus at NP-YOSE, Laura Laird at NP-YOSE, Frank Williss
Subject: Determination of eligibility for Great Sierra Wagon Road, etc
----- Message Contents -----

Text item 1:

Jerry,

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Call me if you have questions at (303) 969-2270.

Thanks.

- Pam

File item 2: WAGON.LTR 10/11/95 5:09PM

File item 3: TIOGARD.DOE 10/10/95 5:07PM

Yosemite, Jerry Mitchell



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Denver Service Center
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H32 (DSC-PM)
YOSE 383-06

OCT 17 1995

Ms. Cherilyn Widell
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 94296-0001

Dear Ms. Widell:

Reference: Yosemite National Park, Pkg. 383, Pt 06

Subject: Request for Determination of Eligibility for the Tuolumne Meadows Segment of the Great Sierra Wagon Road and the Dana Fork Water Intake Weir

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the city of San Francisco, is improving the water and sewer systems in the Tuolumne Meadows area of Yosemite National Park. A segment of the Great Sierra Wagon Road in this area could be directly affected by these improvements. Since the Aspen Valley section of the Great Sierra Wagon Road is on the National Register of Historic Places, we are requesting your opinion on whether the segment through Tuolumne Meadows is eligible for listing on the national register. Based on the attached evaluation, we believe this segment is ineligible because it lacks the physical integrity needed to convey its historic significance.

An unrelated structure which could be affected by a future phase of improvements is a small water intake weir on the Dana Fork of the Tuolumne River near the Tuolumne Lodge. The builder and year of construction are unknown, but it may date from the 1930s. This small concrete structure spans the creek (about 20 feet across) and measures about 6 feet high above the streambed and about 1 foot wide at the top. The purpose of the weir is to raise the water level high enough to feed a water supply pipeline. Most of the original water system for the lodge area has been replaced over the years so the weir lacks integrity related to the original water system design. The weir does not display any particular engineering or architectural qualities. For these reasons, we do not believe the weir meets the qualifications for listing on the national register.

Please let us know whether you concur with our determination that the road segment and water intake weir are ineligible within the next 30 days. If you have questions or need additional information, please call Pam Griggs of this office at (303) 969-2270.

Sincerely,

Debra A. Campbell
Debra A. Campbell
Project Manager

Enclosure

cc:

Pacific West Field Director, w/o enc.

Attention: Tom Mulhern

Superintendent, Yosemite, w/o enc.

Jerry Mitchell, Yosemite, w/c enc.

Great Sierra Wagon Road (Old Tioga Road) Evaluation Segment across Tuolumne Meadows

Description

The segment of the Great Sierra Wagon Road evaluated crosses the Tuolumne Meadows area of Yosemite National Park. The wagon road originally covered about 56 miles from near Crane Flat to the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company's mine on Tioga Hill. Built in 1882-1883 to provide a supply route and future means of transporting ore from the mine, the road crossed the rugged Sierra Nevada in an often twisting, narrow fashion.

This evaluation covers the road segment about 2½ miles long crossing sections 6, 5, and 4 of T.1 S. R.24 E. Beginning immediately north of the paved Tioga Road east of the visitor center, the road travels northeast a short distance then turns east (see the attached map). Boulders at the west end and a locked gate about a mile east prevent public vehicular use of this section. The portion between the paved Tioga Road and the footbridge is a dirt trail and the portion north of the bridge to the gate is used as a service road to access the sewage lagoons and the Parsons Lodge. The segment from the locked gate to the Lembert Dome parking area is an improved gravel road with two travel lanes and parking on both sides and has a built-up road base. The Lembert Dome parking area directly adjacent to the road serves a developed area with rest rooms and picnic tables.

After crossing the paved Tioga Road, the wagon road parallels the new highway to the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge area. This portion is closed to motorized traffic and is severely eroded in places to a depth of 18 to 24 inches below the surrounding terrain. This portion may have been paved at one time; chunks of crumbling asphalt were visible in one place on the north side. Numerous access covers for existing sewer and water lines are spaced regularly along the center of the road. The road passes by another large parking area and two utility buildings. A single low-hanging power line crosses the trail. The old and new roads are usually within sight of each other, sometimes as close as 20 feet. A government housing area to the north of the road is clearly visible.

Significance

The significance of the Great Sierra Wagon Road has been established by listing the Aspen Valley section of the road on the National Register of Historic Places on August 25, 1978 (nomination attached). The wagon road is locally significant under criterion A (properties "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history") of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation for its associations with industry (mining) and transportation. Exploration and mining, especially for silver, resulted in development of the Sierra Nevada including construction of new infrastructure such as this road. In turn, the road opened up areas of stunning scenic beauty to an adventurous public. The Aspen Valley section is also significant under engineering for its stone retaining walls; however, the section of road through Tuolumne Meadows does not display any particular engineering skill.

Integrity

Summary

The Tuolumne Meadows area is a developed visitor destination with numerous buildings, roads, parking lots, trails, and utilities located throughout the area. Within a short distance, the road varies from an improved gravel surface heavily used by vehicles to a narrow dirt trail off-limits to motorized traffic. The alterations to the historic setting and the road's lack of the physical features necessary to convey its historic significance as a 19th century wagon road make this segment of the road ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Discussion

Location - This remnant of the wagon road appears to follow its known historic alignment, bypassed in the 1930s when this section was realigned and reconstructed as the modern paved highway known as the Tioga Road. The exact alignment of the road may be unknown since it was deliberately obliterated under the contract for grading the new road in 1933 and 1934. Information about the contract is contained in the "Final Construction Report: Grading of Tuolumne Meadows-Tioga Pass Section of the Tioga Road, Yosemite Park Project E4-C1, Grading, Yosemite National Park, Tuolumne County, California," by J.A. Killalee, Assistant Highway Engineer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads, District Two, January 22, 1936.

Killalee wrote:

Part of the contract work consisted of the obliteration of the old road, roughly paralleling the project [11.629 miles from about 2 miles west of Tuolumne Meadows to Tioga Pass]. This operation was performed on a force account basis. The best results were secured by scarifying the old road surface as deeply as possible to bring to the surface the old soil covered by gravel during previous maintenance operations. The resulting rough uneven surface was then smoothed down by dragging a bulldozer blade attached to a tractor over the roadway. Where the road was in the forest, old stumps, logs, boulders and forest litter were spread on the scarified surface giving a good effect. Where the road was in the open, roadway banks were rounded off and a smooth appearance in conformity with the surrounding terrain was secured. In places, forest duff and topsoil from the adjacent natural surface were spread over the roadway in order to blend the two areas. (p. 10-11)

Although some sections probably reflect the original alignment, other portions are less certain because of this intentional obliteration. At the eastern end of this segment, the trail eventually comes to another footbridge (of recent construction) just south of the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge. The wagon road alignment, however, probably follows the service road to the water treatment plant and water tank area keeping to the north of this facility and south of the paved Tioga Road.

Design - Currently, the road's surface materials vary from dirt to gravel to asphalt. In some dirt sections, erosion has channelized the road into a narrow trough more like a trail. The gravel section near the Lembert Dome parking area is wide enough for two travel lanes and parking on both sides and has a built-up road base. These variations do not reflect the original design or materials of the wagon road.

Setting - The setting of the wagon road through Tuolumne Meadows has changed drastically from more than a century of use by visitors to Yosemite National Park. Originally built through a vast wilderness, the area now supports intense visitor use. A store, restaurant, lodge, stables, ranger station, visitor center, campground, employee housing, and attendant utilities have visibly changed the wilderness setting.

The road corridor itself is almost always within immediate visual or audible range of these intrusions. In addition, the section of road closed to motor vehicles contains many utility access covers for sewer and water lines running beneath the road. Also, an overhead power line crosses the road in one location.

Materials - As noted previously, the surface materials vary widely. In addition, maintenance crews have installed corrugated metal pipe culverts to provide drainage in several locations. Evidence suggests that the small bridge near the Parsons Memorial Lodge was built as part of the wagon road; however, only the stonemasonry abutments and piers could be that old since steel I-beams now support the bridge deck. Replacement of all of the bridge's materials except the abutments and piers has substantially altered its character.

Workmanship - This road segment through the relatively flat Tuolumne Meadows does not exhibit the skill or craftsmanship apparent on other, more rugged sections of the road. For example, the Aspen Valley segment already listed on the National Register shows a high level of skill through the construction of stonemasonry retaining walls and culverts.

Feeling - A person traveling this section of the road today would not readily recognize it as a 19th century wagon road. Alterations to the width and surface make its identification as a wagon road difficult.

Association - Numerous modern intrusions combined with changes to the road itself impede its physical ability to convey its relationship to its historic significance.

Conclusion

Although the road is significant under criterion A for its associations with industry (mining) and transportation, it lacks the physical integrity necessary to qualify it for the National Register of Historic Places.

Attachments

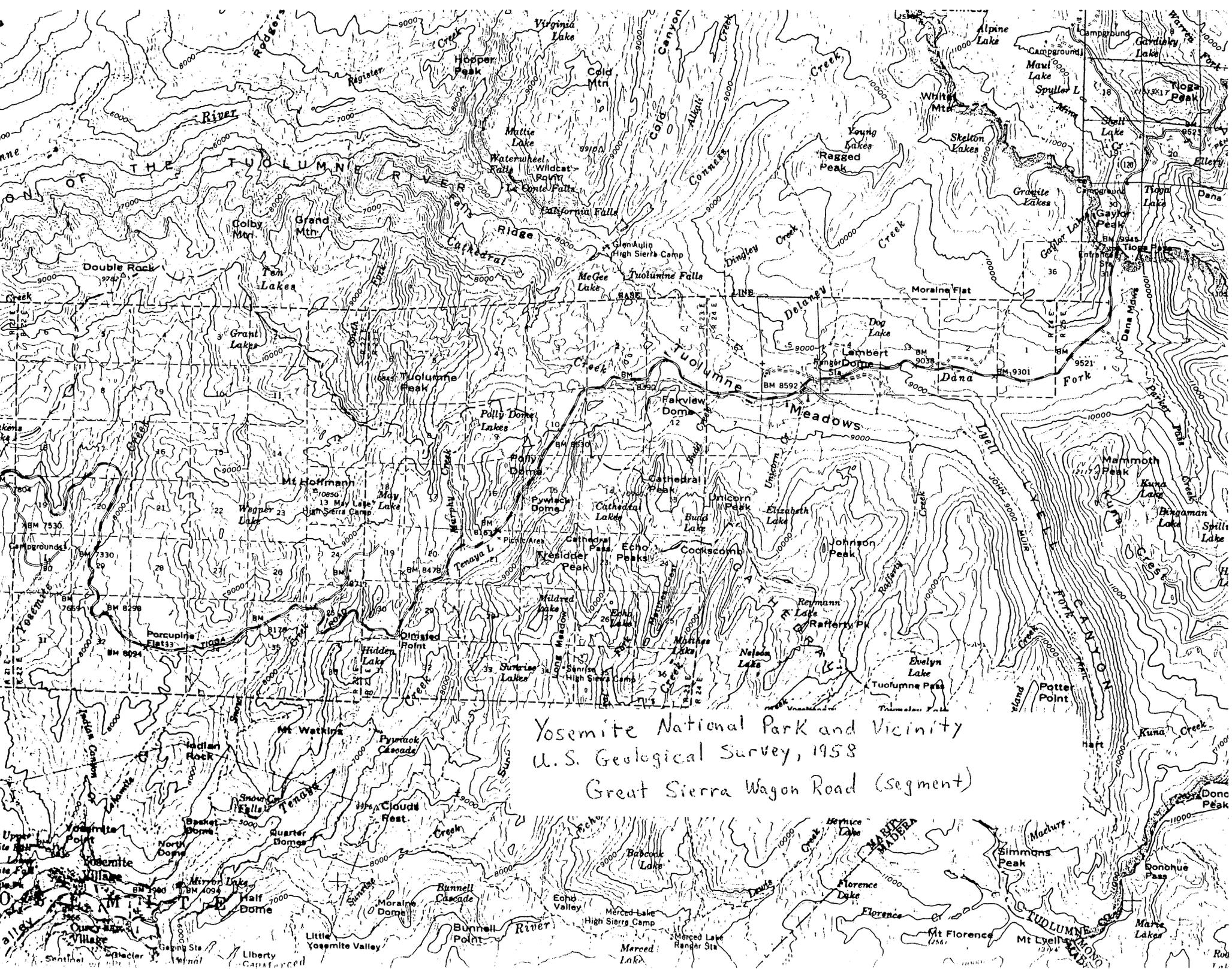
Maps

Photographs

Aspen Valley National Register Nomination Form

Sources

- Bureau of Public Roads, District Two, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1936 "Final Construction Report: Grading of Tuolumne Meadows-Tioga Pass Section of the Tioga Road, Yosemite Park Project E4-C1, Grading, Yosemite National Park, Tuolumne County, California," by J.A. Killalee, Assistant Highway Engineer. On file at the Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park.
- Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, Department of the Interior
1992 "Tioga Road (Great Sierra Wagon Road), Yosemite National Park, HAER No. CA-117e." Draft dated 7/15/92 on file at the Denver Service Center, Lakewood, Colorado.
- National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
1987 *Historic Resource Study, Yosemite: The Park and its Resources: A History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California*, by Linda Wedel Greene. Denver Service Center, Lakewood, Colorado.
- National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
"Historical Assessment and Evaluation of the Tioga Road in Yosemite National Park," by Harlan Unrau, undated manuscript on file at the Denver Service Center, Lakewood, Colorado.
- National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
Manuscript Records: Box 12, Tioga Rd, Box 1 of 2 and Box 979.447 and photographs of Tuolumne Meadows area. On file at the Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park.
- National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
1978 "National Register Nomination Form, Great Sierra Wagon Road, Aspen Valley Road." On file at the Denver Service Center, Lakewood, Colorado.
- Yosemite Association in cooperation with the National Park Service
1961 *The Tioga Road: A History, 1883-1961*, by Keith A. Trexler, (revised 1975, 1980). On file at the Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park.



Yosemite National Park and Vicinity
U.S. Geological Survey, 1958
Great Sierra Wagon Road (segment)

Great Sierra Wagon Road
(taken July 25-26, 1995 by Pam Griggs)

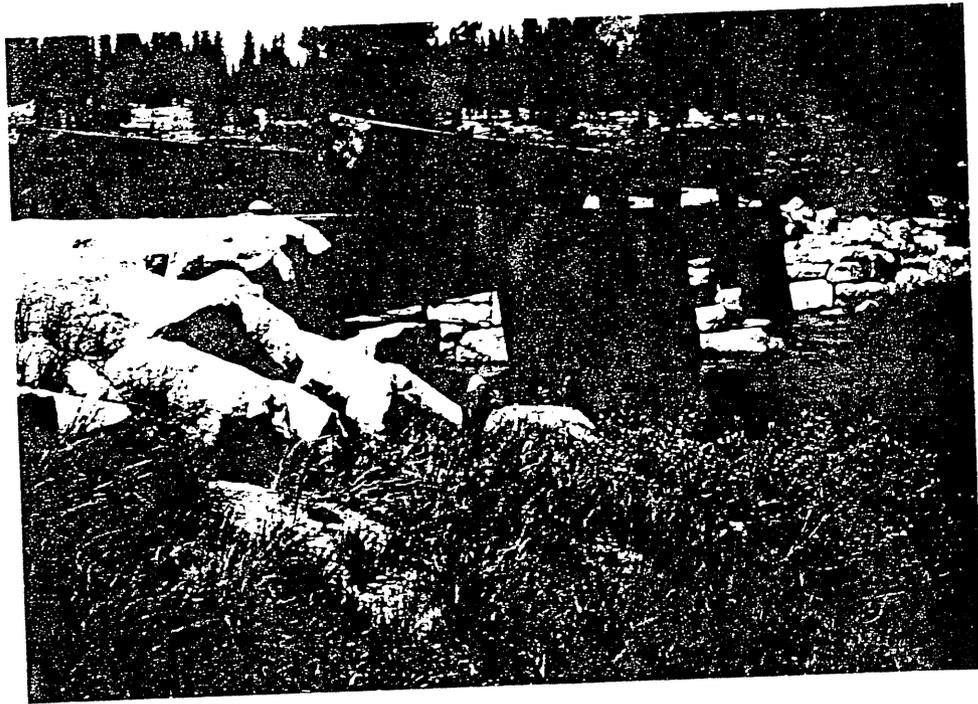


1. Looking northeast, from intersection with modern Tioga Road, section with gravel surface, closed to vehicles



2. Looking north, two corrugated metal pipe culverts (about 36 inches in diameter), road surface washed out

Great Sierra Wagon Road
(taken July 25-26, 1995 by Pam Griggs)

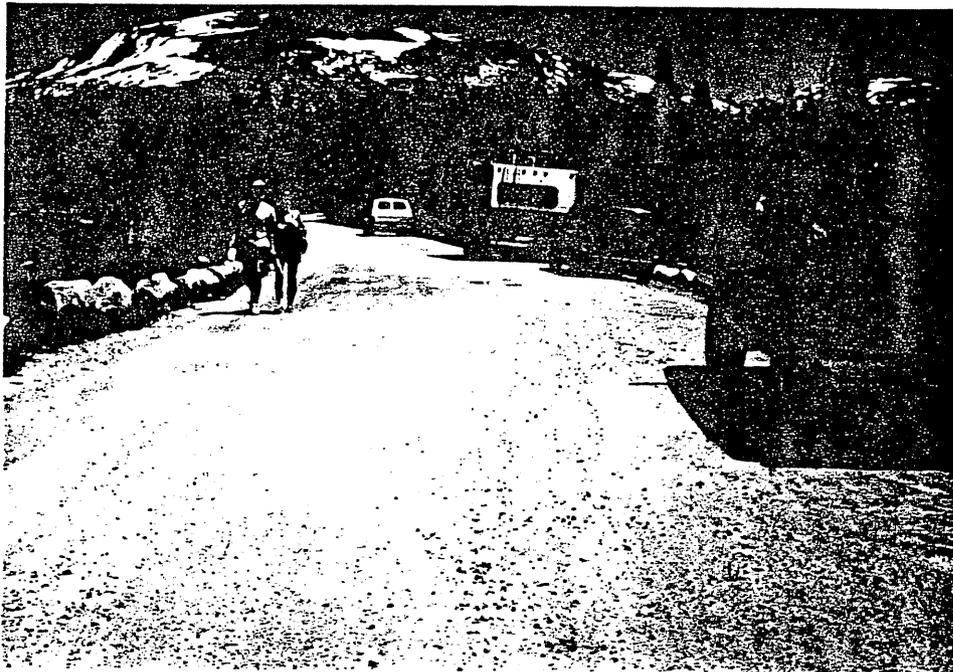


3. Looking north, bridge along Great Sierra Wagon Road, stone abutments may be original, the superstructure is not: the bridge deck rests on steel I-beams



4. Looking east, gravel section used as government access road but closed to the public, Lembert Dome in the background

Great Sierra Wagon Road
(taken July 25-26, 1995 by Pam Griggs)



5. Looking southeast, wide, gravel section used as public road between locked gate and Lembert Dome parking area



6. Looking east, section with gravel surface, south of modern Tioga Road, closed to vehicles

Great Sierra Wagon Road
(taken July 25-26, 1995 by Pam Griggs)



7. Looking west, narrow trail section closed to vehicles, note shed-type building on left (in shadows), overhead power line, and parking lot in background



8. Looking east, eroded trail section, closed to vehicles

Great Sierra Wagon Road
(taken July 25-26, 1995 by Pam Griggs)



9. Water line access cover (representative of several) in middle of Great Sierra Wagon Road