

Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley  
Campground Improvements Project

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# Yosemite National Park

## Revised Finding of No Significant Impact

### I. Background

This Revised Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents the decision of the National Park Service to rescind the February 2004 *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project Finding of No Significant Impact* (2004 FONSI) and to approve a Modified Alternative 3. This alternative consists of reducing the number of tent cabins at Curry Village and limited tree removal work at the Upper Pines Campground. The environmental compliance for the removal of tent cabins at Curry Village and trees at the Upper Pines Campground *embodied* in the *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project Environmental Assessment* (Curry Village and Campground Project) remains in place.

This Revised FONSI is being issued as a result of the National Park Service's decision to settle two lawsuits that were filed against the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan (Merced River Plan) and the Yosemite Valley Plan (YVP). In 2000, a lawsuit was filed challenging the Merced River Plan (MRP). (*Friends of Yosemite Valley v. Salazar*, CV-F-00-6191 (E.D. Cal.)) In 2006, a lawsuit was filed challenging the Yosemite Valley Plan. (*Friends of Yosemite Valley v. Salazar*, CV-F-06-1902 (E.D. Cal.)) Because the Yosemite Valley Plan was tiered from the Merced River Plan, the court agreed to suspend proceedings on the YVP case until the court reached a final decision on the MRP case. In March 2008, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued an opinion finding that the 2005 Merced River Plan did not completely satisfy the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Following that decision, the National Park Service and the plaintiffs began settlement discussions to resolve the YVP and MRP lawsuits and to establish a framework for moving forward on a new version of the Merced River Plan. The National Park Service and the plaintiffs reached a settlement in September 2009 which can be viewed on the park's Web site:  
<http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/upload/mrpsettlementagreement.pdf>.

As a part of the Settlement Agreement, the National Park Service agreed to prepare a Revised Record of Decision for the 2000 *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement*. The Revised Record of Decision for the Yosemite Valley Plan revokes NEPA compliance for many of the actions that had originally been selected for implementation in the 2000 Yosemite Valley Plan Record of Decision. This decision had implications for the Curry Village and Campgrounds Project because many of the actions included in it were tiered from the Yosemite Valley Plan. In addition, the National Park Service committed to prepare a new version of the MRP by 2012. These two factors led the National Park Service to conclude that additional actions from the Curry Village and Campgrounds Project should not be implemented at this time. This Revised FONSI, therefore, rescinds the underlying NEPA compliance for all actions other than those included in Modified Alternative 3, and it rescinds approval for all projects other than those included in Modified Alternative 3. This Revised FONSI does not preclude the National Park Service from proposing the same or similar actions in the future through a new conservation planning and environmental impact process.

## II. Purpose and Need

The goal of the Curry Village and Campgrounds Project was to undertake a comprehensive redevelopment of the Curry Village and Pines campgrounds areas, including the following actions:

- The closing of Southside Drive through Stoneman Meadow.
- The replacement of the Curry Village ice rink with a removable rink.
- The removal and relocation of a number of visitor and employee housing units at Curry Village.
- The limited expansion of campground capacity.

The planning goals guiding the project included the following, as presented in the 1980 *General Management Plan* (GMP).

- Providing several types of accommodations, primarily in the low-cost range.
- Removing facilities from geologically hazardous areas to avoid personal injury and structural damage.
- Relocate employee housing out of geologically hazardous areas and remove nonessential housing.

### **III A. Original Selected Alternative and Alternatives Considered or Analyzed**

The 2004 *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project Environmental Assessment* analyzed three alternatives: Alternative 1: No Action; Alternative 2; and Alternative 3, Selected Alternative (Rescinded). The alternatives were developed by the National Park Service based on the project purpose and need, issues raised during scoping, and other public comments. The environmental assessment (EA) disclosed the potential environmental consequences that may result from implementation of each alternative. As a result of the litigation discussed above, the National Park Service has decided to implement Modified Alternative 3, which includes only the reduction of tent cabin units at Curry Village and tree removal carried out at the Upper Pines Campground prior to the stop-work order of November 2006. These actions were the subject of full public review and comment during the NEPA process that accompanied the Curry Village and Campgrounds Project EA and 2004 FONSI.

#### ***Alternative 1: No Action***

The No Action Alternative maintains the status quo in the project area. It provides a baseline from which to compare other alternatives, to evaluate the magnitude of proposed changes, and to measure the environmental effects of those changes. Under this alternative, no dramatic or comprehensive changes would take place in the management of the project area. Private vehicles and buses would continue to be the primary modes of transportation into the area. A combination of scattered parking and formal and informal parking lots would continue. Campsites and lodging units would remain at current levels (i.e., the number remaining after the 1997 flood and its subsequent cleanup).

#### ***Alternative 2***

##### ***Curry Village***

Alternative 2 would implement the changes to the project area envisioned in the Yosemite Valley Plan. Private vehicles and buses would continue to be the primary modes of transportation into the area, but the elimination of day-visitor parking would likely increase the percentage of transit use. Parking would be less scattered and would be located closer to the user (e.g., tent cabin, campsite). The number of cabins-with-bath would increase and the number of tent cabins would decrease under this alternative. Southside Drive would be closed in conformance with the Yosemite Valley Plan, making Curry Village Road the main access road to the campgrounds east of Curry Village and other parts of the east Yosemite Valley. The entrance roadway into Curry Village would be redesigned in a triangular entry pattern.

The ice rink would be removed. During winter months a new removable ice rink would be located on a portion of the Curry Orchard parking lot. The Mountain Shop would be located west of the new Curry Village entrance loop road. The fruit trees in the historic Curry Orchard would be removed. A portion of the parking area would be restored to natural conditions, and a portion would be developed as a parking area. The new parking area would be planted with a mixture of native deciduous and evergreen tree species. The tree canopy would be substantial enough to screen views from park visitors looking into the project area from Glacier Point. All employee housing and support facilities would be demolished, except for the historic Huff House, which would be restored to accommodate four guest lodging units. The historic bungalows would be converted to visitor lodging facilities, for a total of 25 rooms. A single-truck fire station would be constructed at the west end of Curry Village.

### ***Amphitheater at Clark's Bridge***

A new 460-seat amphitheater would be constructed north of Clark's Bridge. The new amphitheater would be reached via disabled-accessible paved trails. It would be sited on axis with Tenaya Canyon, which would allow a 360-degree, unobstructed view of the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley.

### ***Campground-Serving Facilities***

The existing campground check station would be relocated along the realigned Curry Village Road, east of Curry Village. In addition to a small kiosk structure serving both incoming and exiting campers, a 2,000 to 2,400-square-foot building would be constructed on the south side of Curry Village Road.

A new dump station for recreational vehicles would be located on the north side of Curry Village Road, across from the new campground check station. This dump station would replace the existing Upper Pines dump station, which would be removed from the River Protection Overlay. Two bays would be provided, with dual vehicle access to each bay.

### ***Campgrounds***

The new South Camp area would be developed with 10 group walk-in and 30 walk-in campsites. Thirty parking spaces would be provided for the group campsites (three spaces per campsite), and 30 spaces would be provided for the walk-in campsites (one space per campsite) in separate parking areas. A shuttle bus stop would be located along Happy Isles Loop Road at the new South Camp area. One restroom building and two restroom/shower buildings would be provided for the campers. One restroom/shower building and most of the walk-in campsites parking area would be located in the talus zone. The parking lot for the walk-in sites would cover an existing wetland.

At Upper Pines Campground, 30 drive-in campsites would be added to the open area northwest of the existing drive-in loops, and 45 walk-in campsites would be added to the area adjacent to the Merced River (in addition to the 240 existing drive-in sites). A new parking area with 45 parking spaces (and three handicapped spaces) would be installed adjacent to the Upper Pines campground access road for walk-in campsite users. The existing dump station would be removed. A new restroom and new shower/restroom building would be constructed to serve the new drive-in campsites. Two restrooms would be provided for the walk-in campsites. The 10 existing restrooms would be upgraded.

Sixty drive-in campsites would continue to be provided at Lower Pines Campground by removing campsites from the River Protection Overlay and reconfiguring the existing campground to accommodate these campsites. One restroom would be upgraded, and a restroom would be constructed within loop D at the northwest end of the campground. A new shower/restroom facility would be constructed within the first loop road (Loop A). One campsite would be located in a wetland, and some campsites would remain within the 1997 flood extent.

### ***Alternative 3 (2004 Agency Preferred Alternative)***

#### ***Curry Village***

Alternative 3 would implement the changes to the project area envisioned in the Yosemite Valley Plan. Private vehicles and buses would continue to be the primary modes of transportation into the area, but the elimination of day-visitor parking would likely increase the percentage of transit use. Parking would be less scattered and would be located closer to the user (e.g., tent cabin, campsite). The number of cabins-with-bath would increase and the number of tent cabins would decrease under this alternative. Southside Drive would be closed in conformance with the Yosemite Valley Plan, making Curry Village Road the main access road to the campgrounds east of Curry Village and other parts of the east Yosemite Valley. The entrance roadway into Curry Village would be redesigned in a circular entry pattern.

The ice rink would be removed. During winter months, a new removable ice rink would be located immediately north of the Meadow Deck, in a position that would capture the view of Half Dome. The Mountain Shop would be relocated to a new building east of its current location. The fruit trees in the historic Curry Orchard would be removed. A portion of the parking area would be restored to natural conditions, and a portion would be developed as a parking area. The new parking area would be planted with a mixture of native deciduous and evergreen tree species. The tree canopy would be substantial enough to screen views from park visitors looking into the project area from Glacier Point. All employee housing and support facilities would be demolished, except for the historic Huff House, which would be restored to accommodate four lodging units. All of

the historic bungalows would be retained. A single-truck fire station would be constructed at the west end of Curry Village.

### ***Amphitheater at Clark's Bridge***

A new 460-seat amphitheater would be constructed north of Clark's Bridge. The new amphitheater would be reached via disabled-accessible paved trails. It would be sited on axis with Tenaya Canyon, which would allow a 360-degree, unobstructed view of the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley.

### ***Campground-Serving Facilities***

The existing campground check station would be relocated along the realigned Curry Village Road, east of Curry Village. In addition to a small kiosk structure serving both incoming and exiting campers, a 2,000 to 2,400-square-foot building would be constructed on the south side of Curry Village Road.

A new recreational vehicle dump station would be located on the north side of Curry Village Road, across from the new campground check station. This dump station would replace the existing Upper Pines dump station, which would be removed from the River Protection Overlay. Two bays would be provided, with dual vehicle access to each bay.

A new centralized shower/restroom facility would be constructed south of the campground check station between Curry Village and Happy Isles Loop Road to serve all of the campgrounds. The building would be integrated into the woodland setting, with maximum separation from the adjacent campsites and the new campground check station.

### ***Campgrounds***

The new South Camp walk-in campground area would be developed with 10 group walk-in and 16 walk-in campsites. Parking for 46 vehicles (three spaces per group campsite and one space per walk-in campsite) would be provided. Three new restroom buildings would be provided for the South Camp walk-in campground. One restroom building would be located in the talus zone. No shower facilities would be provided, because campers would use the central shower facility.

At Upper Pines Campground, 30 drive-in recreational vehicle campsites with electrical hookups would be added to the open area to the northwest of the existing drive-in loops, and 59 walk-in campsites would be added to the area adjacent to the Merced River (in addition to the 240 existing drive-in sites). A new parking area with 59 parking spaces (and three handicapped spaces) would be installed adjacent to the Upper Pines campground access road for walk-in campsite users. The existing recreational vehicle dump station would be removed. Two new restrooms would be constructed to serve the

recreational vehicle area. Nine existing restrooms would be demolished and one existing restroom upgraded. Ten new restrooms would be constructed to serve the drive-in campsites, and two new restrooms would be constructed to serve the walk-in campsites. No shower facilities would be provided, because campers would use the central shower facility.

Sixty drive-in campsites, including 18 recreational vehicle campsites with electrical hookups, would be provided at the Lower Pines Campground by removing campsites from the River Protection Overlay and reconfiguring the existing campground to accommodate these campsites. The existing pattern of development would be maintained; however, the removal of the existing amphitheater would create a common open space between the campground and the adjacent river corridor. Three restrooms would be removed and new restrooms would be constructed within the first, second, and third loop roads. No shower facilities would be provided, because campers would use the central shower facility.

### **III B. Selected Alternative – Modified Alternative 3 (2010)**

Modified Alternative 3 is a modification of Alternative 3 as described in the 2004 *Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact*. Modified Alternative 3 consists of the following components:

- Reducing the number of tent cabins at Curry Village. As specified in the 2009 Agreement, 108 visitor tent cabin and 40 employee tent cabins are to be eliminated from the hazard zone defined following the rockfall of October 2008.
- Tree removal carried out prior to the stop-work order issued by the U.S. District Court in November 2006. This work involved tree removal at the site of 30 planned RV sites (Loop A), and the site of the parking area for a planned walk-in campsite at the Upper Pines Campground.

#### ***Tent Cabin Removal and Partial Relocation***

The 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative specified the removal of 253 tent cabins out of a total of 427. That alternative retained 45 Westside tent cabins and 129 Eastside tent cabins for a total of 174 tent cabins. The 2010 Selected Alternative, however, revises the number of tent cabins marked for removal to 148 (108 visitor tent cabins and 40 employee housing tent cabins). All of these are located within a rockfall hazard zone established after the rockfall of October 2008. While the number of cabins slated for removal in the 2010 Selected Alternative is determined by a response to the rock fall that took place after 2004, the move to reduce the number of tent cabins is consistent with the rescinded 2004 Selected Alternative. The action is also consistent with guidelines in

the 2004 *Curry Village and Campground Project Environmental Assessment* that supports the “Removal of facilities and buildings from geologic hazard zones whenever practical” (2004 Curry Village and Campground Project EA, Geologic Hazards, p. II-38).

### ***Rockfall Events of October 2008***

On the morning of October 8, 2008, close to 17,000 tons of granite fell towards tent and hard-sided cabins located close by the rock face. At least five cabins were destroyed and several more damaged. Some of the effected cabins had been occupied by a group of sixth-graders who had left for breakfast just minutes before. Immediately following the October 8 event, park personnel marked a perimeter and excluded visitors and others from the area. Over the next several weeks, Yosemite National Park’s staff geologist and other experts surveyed the area and recommended a widened exclusion zone. In November 2008, park officials announced the closure of 234 visitor tents and cabins, as well as 42 tents and cabins used by concessions employees, along with several restrooms, a shower house, and linen huts. The move resulted in the number of visitor accommodations at Curry Village being reduced by more than a third. To limit the impact on Yosemite Institute programs for students, 90 tents and 14 cabins, formerly used by employees were reassigned to the student program.

### ***Tree Removal***

Tree removal specified in the rescinded 2004 Preferred Alternative was carried out prior to the stop-work order issued by the U.S. District Court in November 2006. This action involved trees at the site of 30 planned RV sites at Loop A, and at the site of planned Walk-in Camp parking at Upper Pines Campground. No other actions connected to these project components of the rescinded 2004 Preferred Alternative have been completed at this time.

## **IV. Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

The National Park Service has considered all alternatives in this analysis in accordance with NEPA and California Environmental Quality regulations (CEQ Regulations, Section 1505.2) and has determined that the Alternative 3 (the 2004 Preferred Alternative), as presented in the *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project Environmental Assessment*, is environmentally preferable based on its furtherance of the following NEPA goals, as detailed below.

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying criteria identified in NEPA, Section 101, to each alternative considered. In accordance with the NEPA, the environmentally preferred alternative would best: (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing

surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintaining, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use that would permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of limited resources.

- **NEPA Section 101 Requirement 1.** "Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations."

Alternative 3 (the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative) would best fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations by improving the visitor experience, including visitor safety, and restore previously developed areas to natural conditions, while minimizing environmental impacts. Alternative 3 reduces development in environmentally sensitive areas and improves lodging and other visitor services in Curry Village and the campgrounds in accordance with the Yosemite Valley Plan. Alternative 1 would not fulfill the responsibilities, because the continuance of existing development patterns in the project area would continue to adversely affect sensitive environmental resources and expose visitors to hazardous conditions. Alternative 2 is similar to the Preferred Alternative, but would have more adverse impacts to sensitive biological resources. Modified Alternative 3 would also continue to adversely affect sensitive environmental resources by maintaining existing development patterns.

- **NEPA Section 101 Requirement 2.** "Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings."

Alternative 3 (the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative) reduces development in environmentally sensitive areas, thereby allowing for the proposed restoration of these areas as identified in the Yosemite Valley Plan. Alternative 3 has been designed to minimize adverse effects on scenic and natural resources during construction, through consolidating development within the core Curry Village and campground area and removal of the road through Stoneman Meadow. Alternative 3 is expected to reduce the potential for future visitor related impacts on highly valued resources by locating visitor facilities and trails in less environmentally sensitive areas. Alternative 1 and Modified Alternative 3 would maintain the existing configuration of facilities in environmentally sensitive areas, with high potential for adverse future impacts on the surroundings. Alternative 2 would be the same as the Preferred Alternative. These two action alternatives improve the aesthetic quality of the project area.

- **NEPA Section 101 Requirement 3.** “Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.”

Alternative 3 (the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative) would attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment by reducing development in environmentally sensitive areas, such as rivers and creekbeds, floodplains, and wet meadows. The removal of campgrounds from the River Protection Overlay, restoration of Curry Orchard, and avoidance of wetlands would reduce impacts to these resources. The removal of tent cabins from the talus zone would increase visitor safety. Both action alternatives would locate campsites in the floodplain. Alternative 1 would result in the continued degradation of the environment and risk to safety due to continued presence of visitor facilities in environmentally sensitive areas. Modified Alternative 3 will further goal 3 by removing a portion of visitor accommodations out of the rockfall hazard zone. Alternative 2 is similar to the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative but would locate the nonessential facilities (parking lot and restroom with shower facilities) in the talus zone.

- **NEPA Section 101 Requirement 4.** “Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintaining, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.”

Alternative 3 (the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative) is designed to minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive areas, including cultural and historic resources. The Curry Village and campground plans would minimize new development in culturally sensitive areas, such as Stoneman Meadow and along the Merced River, while maintaining the historic fabric of the Curry Village Historic District. In addition, the National Park Service would comply with the terms of the 1999 Programmatic Agreement to mitigate impacts to historic and archeological resources. Alternative 1 and Modified Alternative 3 would retain visitor-serving facilities in sensitive environments, resulting in higher potential adverse effects on natural and cultural landscape features. Alternative 2 would have the same impacts as the 2004 Preferred Alternative. These two action alternatives would improve the cultural and historical aspects of the valley more than Modified Alternative 3.

- **NEPA Section 101 Requirement 5.** “Achieve a balance between population and resources use that would permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities.”

Alternative 3 (the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative) is designed to ensure a higher quality visitor experience and safety, while reducing the potential for future impacts to environmentally sensitive areas. There would be a balance between population and resource, permitting a high standard of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities.

Alternative 1 and Modified Alternative 3 would result in more potential adverse effects to park resources due to the continued presence of visitor serving facilities in environmentally sensitive areas. Alternative 2 is similar to the 2004 Preferred Alternative with respect to visitor amenities, but would have greater impacts on wetlands.

- **NEPA Section 101 Requirement 6.** “Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.”

Alternative 3 (the 2004 Agency Preferred Alternative) would enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources by reducing visitor serving facilities in environmentally sensitive areas and improving services to developed areas. Alternative 1 and Modified Alternative 3 would retain visitor serving facilities in environmentally sensitive areas. Alternative 2 is similar to the 2004 Preferred Alternative, but would have greater impacts on wetlands.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, upon full consideration of the elements of NEPA, Section 101, Alternative 3 represents the environmentally preferable alternative for the Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project. After review of potential resource and visitor impacts and developing mitigation for impacts to natural and cultural resources, Alternative 3 would provide the greatest balance between improving visitor amenities, while minimizing impacts to sensitive environmental resources. Alternative 3 would provide improved visitor amenities and facilities, a high-quality visitor experience, and contribute to effective park operations, while minimizing impacts to sensitive environmental resources.

As explained below, Modified Alternative 3 presents a much more limited group of actions than Alternative 3 and only partially fulfills the environmental goals of NEPA Section 101. For these reasons, the National Park Service continues to believe that Alternative 3 is the environmentally preferable alternative.

## **V. Why the Selected Alternative Would Not Have a Significant Effect on the Human Environment**

An analysis of the 2004 Preferred Alternative in the *Curry Village and Campgrounds Project EA/FONSI* (2004 EA/FONSI) found that the actions contained in it would not have significant adverse effects on the Curry Village and the Upper, Lower, and North Pines campground areas. Modified Alternative 3 (Selected Alternative, 2010) carries forward only two actions from the 2004 alternative, one of which is the removal of tent cabin units at Curry Village. As detailed in the 2004 EA/FONSI, construction, relocation,

or demolition activities would result in short term noise and air quality impacts. However, the removal of these units from the rockfall hazard zone would result in substantial improvements to health and safety and would help to reduce crowding in the area.

## **VI. Non-Impairment of Park Resources**

Based on the relevant analysis provided in the 2003 *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project Environmental Assessment*, the National Park Service concludes that implementation of Modified Alternative 3 presents no major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Yosemite National Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of Yosemite National Park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's 1980 *General Management Plan* or other relevant National Park Service planning documents. Consequently, implementation of the proposed action would not violate the National Park Service Organic Act.

## **VII. Measures to Minimize Environmental Harm**

To ensure that natural and cultural resources and the visitor experience are fully protected during the implementation of this decision, a consistent set of mitigation measures has been applied to Modified Alternative 3. Although actions to be implemented have been modified as a result of the Settlement Agreement, the mitigation measures to minimize environmental harm have remained unchanged and can be viewed on the park's Web site: <http://www.nps.gov/archive/yose/planning/curry/>

The National Park Service continues to find Modified Alternative 3 to be acceptable under Executive Order 11988 for the protection of floodplains and Executive Order 11990 for the protection of wetlands because measures to minimize environmental harm have not changed although the actions to be implemented have been modified and reduced or eliminated.

## **VIII. Public Involvement and Coordination**

### ***Scoping and Public Comment History***

Scoping for the *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project* involved a range of options and launched in the fall of 2002, when the National Park Service requested public comment and participation on the preparation of the environmental assessment. The formal public scoping period began with a press release issued on September 20, 2002 that described the intent of the project and solicited comments from the public through October 26, 2002. An open house was held at

Yosemite National Park on October 23, 2002 to solicit comments. The public was encouraged to submit scoping comments identifying key issues and potential alternatives that should be addressed in the environmental review for this project.

*The Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project Environmental Assessment* was released for a 30-day public review period beginning September 11, 2003 and closed October 11, 2003. An analysis of the public comments received indicated a total of 255 discrete comments that were organized into 138 different concerns. Issues raised included park operations and general management issues, purpose and need for the action, NEPA compliance, alternatives, relationship to other planning efforts, length of public review period, protection of natural and cultural resources, access, visitor services, and visitor experience. None of the comments received introduced substantive new information, but some raised questions that required additional information to be included in the environmental assessment. No modifications to the proposed action were made as a result of comments, but project refinements were added to the original project document that included a revision to specify that a mixture of native evergreen and deciduous trees would be used in landscape plans for the new parking area to be developed in a portion of the existing Curry Orchard, and the inclusion of handicapped parking in the vicinity of the Curry Village grocery store to facilitate access by handicapped persons.

### ***Litigation and Settlement Agreement***

This Revised FONSI is being issued in accordance with the Settlement Agreement that resolved the lawsuits challenging the 2000 Merced River Plan and 2005 Revised Merced River Plan, and the 2000 Yosemite Valley Plan. Although public comments were not solicited on the selection of Modified Alternative 3, each of the actions included in alternative was subject to the full and complete public and interagency scoping and review process that was conducted for the Curry Village & Campgrounds Project EA.

## **VIII. American Indian Consultation**

In preparing the 2004 *Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Improvements Project EA/FONSI*, Yosemite National Park consulted with American Indian Tribes that have cultural associations with Yosemite Valley, including the American Indian Council of Mariposa County, Inc. (Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation), the Tuolumne Me-wuk Tribal Council, and the Mono Lake Indian Community on proposed actions under the Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campground Improvements Project. Information sharing and project planning included consultation sessions with the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation on August 1, 2002, October 24, 2002, November 26, 2002, February 27, 2003, April 24, 2003, June 26, 2003, August 6, 2003, October 2, 2003, October 28, 2003 and December 8, 2003. The Mono Lake Paiute and Tuolumne Band of Me-wuk received draft copies of the environmental assessment for review.

## X. Conclusion

It is the determination of the National Park Service that the Revised Selected Alternative (Modified Alternative 3) is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. No long-term adverse impacts to floodplains or wetlands would occur from the Selected Alternative. The National Park Service finds the Selected Alternative to be acceptable under Executive Order 11988 for the protection of floodplains and Executive Order 11990 for the protection of wetlands. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement is not required. The Selected Alternative as detailed above may be implemented immediately.

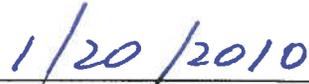
Recommended:

  
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David V. Uberuaga, Acting Superintendent  
Yosemite National Park

  
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Date

Approved:

  
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Rory D. Westberg, Regional Director  
Pacific West Region, National Park Service

  
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Date