



Hetch Hetchy Communications System Upgrade Project

Hetch Hetchy Water and Power (HHW&P), a division of the City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), manages a complex utilities system which provides drinking water to Groveland, the City of San Francisco, and several Bay Area counties, as well as hydroelectric power for San Francisco municipal uses, for sale to irrigation districts, and for sale to other utilities. HHW&P utilizes communication equipment at O'Shaughnessy Dam, in the Hetch Hetchy area of Yosemite National Park, in support of their operation.

What is the proposed project and why is it important?

The current equipment which utilizes existing phone lines transmits voice and data communications essential to the operation and security of HHW&P's electric and water supply utilities, and is also used by Yosemite personnel for park communications. The existing radio and fiber optic equipment are obsolete and no longer supported by their manufacturers. The proposed project would update this infrastructure by replacing or updating components of the communication system throughout Tuolumne County, including potentially adding one new site within Yosemite National Park.

A system upgrade would thus improve radio communication vital to park operational activities, such as law enforcement, search and rescue, and fire management. This will improve the capability to ensure dam security, visitor and staff safety, and protection of park resources.

Who is involved in this project?

The proposed project spans multiple jurisdictions; therefore, the National Park Service is working collaboratively with HHW&P, the City and County of San Francisco, the USDA Forest Service, and the public to prepare an Environmental Assessment/ Initial Study (EA/IS), as required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The EA/IS describes and analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the ***Hetch Hetchy Communications System Upgrade Project***. One of the proposed project sites is located within Yosemite National Park near the O'Shaughnessy Dam area. Within this larger document there is a component that focuses specifically on the potential site located in Yosemite National Park.

What were the criteria for siting a tower?

The collective input of Hetch Hetchy Water and Power, Yosemite National Park, and the public helped determine the most appropriate location for this proposed project within the Hetch Hetchy region. The site proposed for this project:

- Is outside of Yosemite National Park Wilderness Area
 - Has line- of- sight visibility to O'Shaughnessy Dam and the communication tower on Burnout Ridge
 - Has limited visibility from locations viewed by the public
 - Is relatively close to an exiting electrical distribution line to avoid the need for further infrastructure
 - Is close to an existing road and turnout to allow for easy maintenance access
 - Is an area large enough for a communications tower and equipment shelter
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Where would a tower be added in the park?

Proposed locations for a new communications tower in Yosemite National Park are shown on the map. Public and internal scoping for this project occurred in spring 2006. Based on this input, the project team selected two locations, Site 7 and Site 9, for further analysis as potential tower locations in the EA/IS. Both of these sites are located outside of Wilderness boundaries. Site 9 has been identified as the preferred location. A “No Action” alternative is also analyzed in the EA/IS.



Aerial Perspective 1 of Siting Possibilities within Poopenaut Pass Vicinity

Site 9 - Preferred Alternative
Site 7 - Alternative Site

Public Participation

The National Park Service is looking for your input on the EA/IS. Public participation is essential for the success of this and all other park improvement projects. Here are some ways to stay involved in this project and its planning process:

- **Attend a National Park Service public open house** to talk with project specialists and obtain more information on the project. Visit the park's planning website (listed below) for upcoming dates.
- **Add your name to the park's planning list** and receive the *Planning Update* newsletter as well as other planning- related notices. You can also submit your email address to receive the park's periodic electronic newsletter.
- **To request a copy of the EA/IS** (CD or hard copy), write, email or fax your request to the address listed below. *All comments must be postmarked by November 2, 2007.* You can submit comments by any of the following means:

Mail: Superintendent

Attn: Hetch Hetchy Communications System Upgrade

P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, CA 95389

Phone: 209/379-1365; **Fax:** 209/379-1294

E- mail: Yose_Planning@nps.gov

- **Visit online:** www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/hetchyproject.htm
- Access PEPC (Planning, Environment, and Public Comment) on the web at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/yose>

Planning Timeline:

Fall 2005:

Early 2006 (February 21, 2006- April 10, 2006):

Fall 2007 (October 2- November 2, 2007):

Winter 2007- 2008:

Internal Agency Scoping

Formal Public Scoping

Public Review of Draft EA/IS

Preparation of Decision Documents