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FEB 11 2008
P. 1076
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

3 February 2008

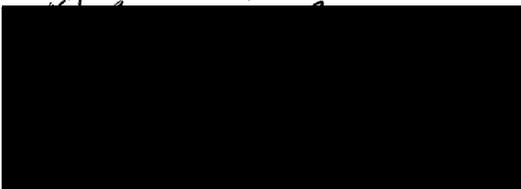
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Re: Vogelsang, High Sierra Camp
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Hello,

It's come to my attention that YNP is planning on upgrading the plumbing and drinking water facilities at Vogelsang High Sierra Camp. Frankly, due to excessive traffic, both human and animal (pack mules), the idea has imploded upon itself. Vogelsang HSC should be closed, permanently, then naturalized and given back to the park as the wilderness it was meant to be. To propose a massive, new sewage treatment facility is contraindicated to the very definition of preservation.

If NPS decides to proceed with the proposed construction, a full and complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must, by law, be prepared for this project. The resultant construction process will result in negative impact to the environment to the Yosemite backcountry.

That's it. Sincerely,



Mountain View, CA 94043

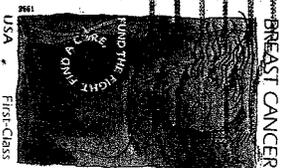
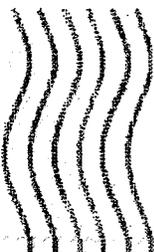
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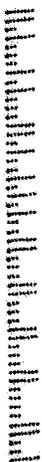
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Superintendent, Yosemite
National Park

PO Box 5717

Yosemite, CA 95389

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VBCU-31-5
FEB 11 2008
P. 183
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Superintendent,

I wrote you last autumn discussing problems, violations and concerns I had after my hike through the park and past some of the High Sierra Camps. I have major concerns re: the use of packstock, excessive use and the HSC's even exist in the "wilderness." The two should not be combined together.

I am writing to submit my concerns and comments for scoping on the proposed Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement

Project.

I can not believe that the construction activities would be conducive to the wilderness character which the GMP supposedly protects. This plan was intended to prohibit further development of facilities. The extensive use of pack animals (which is already degrading our experience) or helicopters and construction materials and noise would be unacceptable.

The wilderness should not be developed with camps that supply more water than is healthy for the natural environment. The use of this water and hundreds of people using the area is now causing continued pollution. To build bigger and better sewage treatment is ridiculous. This area should be allowed to rest and be restored to its natural, original condition.

The trails in these areas are so degraded and eroded that it is not a nice hiking experience. They are full of manure which is causing pollution and stench and flies.

If this project is to continue in any way, I am requesting that you

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do a full EIS because of its potential impact.

Please consider abiding by the 1980 GMP which states, "...there will be no reconstruction of facilities. Wilderness classification will require the eventual elimination of all improvements that do not conform ~~to~~ with wilderness activities....."

I think that sums it up most clearly.

Thank you,



Glen Ellen, Ca.
95442



LET
THIR
JOHN
EAGLE

NORTH BAY CA 949

04 FEB 2008 PM 2 T



95442

Superintendent Y.N.P.
attn. Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities
Imp. Project
box 577

Yosemite, Ca. . 95389
95389000



February 5, 2008

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Attn: Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

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FEB 11 2008
P. 10/1
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

I submit these scoping comments on the proposed Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project.

1. It is my view that the Vogelsang HSC needs to be permanently closed and the area restored to its original natural and pristine condition, then designated as wilderness. I believe the area is not capable of handling the large amount of waste material that is generated there by so many visitors. The last time that I visited the Vogelsang area was about thirty years ago and it seemed me the waste situation was bad even at that time. Now it is much worse.

2. I remind you that the GMP for Yosemite (1980) prohibits further development of facilities or services within potential wilderness additions such as the Vogelsang area and that the proposed construction activities would be a violation of the GMP.

3. The enormous numbers of pack stock animals that are needed for bringing supplies to Vogelsang as well as other High Sierra Camps brings pollution to the beautiful waters of Yosemite streams. Such pollution should not be tolerated by the NPS and it can be minimized by severe limiting of the use of stock animals. Although such pollution is not visible to the eye, it nevertheless creates a blemish on the landscape.

4. If the proposed construction activity goes ahead, the large amount of materials and personnel that would need to be transported into the area would spoil the wilderness character of the area. Another blemish on the landscape.

5. Also, if this proposed construction activity goes ahead, a full Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared for the project. It will likely bring substantial impact to the Yosemite environment.

Thank you for considering my views.



Minden, LA 71055

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LET'S MAKE IT
THINK, SPEAK
John Adams, 1776
POWER OF THE PEOPLE

SHREVEPORT LA 711

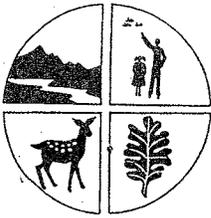
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ATTN: SUPERINTENDENT, YOSEMITE NATIONALPARK
VOGELSANG BACKCOUNTRY UTILITIES IMPROVEMENT
P.O. BOX 577
YOSEMITE, CA 95389



95389+0000



Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

Box 396 • Twain Harte, CA 95383 • (209) 586-7440 • FAX (209) 586-4986

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VBCU-33-S
FEB 11 2008
P-1074
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

February 2, 2008

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Attn: Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

SCOPING COMMENTS – VOGELSANG PROJECT

Dear Mike and planners:

On behalf of our staff and our members, CSERC submits the following scoping comments in response to the request for input for the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp utilities improvement project:

Background

CSERC recognizes the tension and competing objectives between Yosemite Park staff wanting to provide for a diverse range of recreational opportunities and the Park wanting to provide the highest level of compliance with the intent and the mission of wilderness management. Historic use must always be considered as part of the factors to be evaluated in any such management decision, as must the input from countless people who have enjoyed decades of personal use at High Sierra Camps and now urge continued opportunities to utilize Vogelsang and other such camps.

CSERC also recognizes that politics may play a role in any project that may result in diminishment of a historic, traditional recreational use. Certain politicians, and in this case, even the current Administration in Washington, DC, generally espouse continued management of such traditional uses even when there be valid management reasons to phase out or end such practices.

Comments

So, our Center underscores our awareness of competing pressures relative to, in this instance, the High Sierra Camps, and the question of what improvements to make within a wilderness setting.

With those pressures fully acknowledged, CSERC provides the following comments:

- 1) First, CSERC believes that it would be piecemeal planning and a conflict with NEPA for the Park to focus primarily on the upgrade of the drinking water system,

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p. 384

In 1989, the Park Service joined with other federal agencies to put out a "Management Issues" policy directive concerning a wide range of issues tied to wilderness areas. On page 4 of that document, it states:

"The Wilderness Act calls for 'outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation' in wilderness. The challenge is to provide recreational opportunities while keeping wilderness an area 'without permanent improvement or human habitat,' an area where 'man himself is a visitor who does not remain.' "

The Park Service should clearly consider one action alternative in the Vogelsang Utilities Improvement Project that would remove the domestic water supply system and wastewater treatment system at Vogelsang Camp, and which removes the current non-functioning compost toilet at the Backpackers Camp. Under this alternative, the long-term management of these two areas would be to naturalize them and restore them to a condition that is consistent with the surrounding wilderness.

2) In addition to considering the removal of these systems and facilities, the Park Service should clearly consider not only the three specific upgrades or replacement proposal now up for comment, but the Park Service has a NEPA mandate to appropriately consider the cumulative impacts of upgrading these facilities. At this time, the pack trains that support the High Sierra Camps produce a wide range of ecological impacts on the delicate sub-alpine environment. In particular, the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp, at over 10,000 feet in elevation, is located where there is an extremely short growing season, limited soil, and a high level of intolerance of hooves, human trampling, or other concentrated recreation use around core use areas.

The cumulative impacts of the Backpackers Camp and Vogelsang High Sierra Camp include scenic impacts, concentrated air quality impacts, obvious wastewater contamination that affects water quality and aquatic species, and disturbance to wildlife that do not readily ignore thousands of visitors each season. One of my personal concerns from hiking in Yosemite's high wilderness areas has been the high levels of manure along main system trails where the pack trains travel regularly. The manure from the pack trains is not a natural feature of the pristine wilderness, and the flies, smell, and need to avoid stepping in fresh piles all degrades the recreational experience for those who are attempting to enjoy the wild setting.

The limited material now available from the Park at this scoping stage already acknowledges that just for the problematic composting toilet, the Park has been forced to haul out un-composted human waste by helicopter and mule pack train at least 3-4 times per year, creating health and safety issues. Such helicopter flights and mule pack trains also defile the wilderness experience for those seeking solitude in a pristine environment.

The cumulative effects of these camps, the packtrains, their staffs, their grease, food and garbage wastes, and their water/wastewater systems must also be looked at in terms of not just the past and present, but also the future. With concentrated human use in these core areas, the impacts of trampling, noise, disturbance, water contamination, impacts to plants, and impacts to soil all will continue to accumulate over time if the



02/11/2008 06:10 PM
PST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:

Subject: Comments on Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project

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VBCU-34-S

FEB 12 2008

P-1031
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

I am writing to submit scoping comments on the proposed Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project.

As a native Californian who has been backpacking in Yosemite since 1964, I am familiar with the High Sierra Camps. I believe that these camps have served their purpose and should be phased out. Voglesang, in particular, is having environmental problems which should prompt any thinking person to question whether it is appropriate to continue life support at the expense of the Wilderness resource. The patient is terminal, let's pull the plug. Yosemite will be better off without the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp.

I am in favor of closing Vogelsang, restoring the site, and adding it to the Wilderness.



Yreka, CA 96097

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
P.O. BOX 700-W
EL PORTAL, CA 95318

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[Redacted]

02/12/2008 07:24 PM
EST

To: YOSE_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Comments on the proposed Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities
Improvement Project

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VBCW-35-S
FEB 13 2008

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

To: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Re: Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project
From: Frank A. Junga

We made our first trip into Yosemite's wilderness in 1957. We have returned most every summer since then. In the early days we camped wherever we pleased and were not subject to trailhead quotas. Times/rules have changed and we have adapted. We took the new rules to heart because of our deep affection for Yosemite's wilderness. One thing has not changed: our dissatisfaction with NPS's slack oversight of pack animal use in wilderness areas.

It seems that every few years, we have to remind NPS that it chartered to protect Yosemite, not promote enterprises like the pack animal enterprises which degrade wilderness.

There is ample evidence that pack animals a likely source of coliform pollution. This is in addition to trail and meadow degradation caused by pack animals. Yet the pack industry is subject to fewer restrictions than we shanks' mare hikers. Now, it is proposed that the Vogelsang area be further degraded by the construction of an upgraded water supply and sewerage disposal facility for the HSC. You need no further justification to abandon this project than the 1980 GMP. The plan forbids any further development of facilities or services within potential wilderness additions. The Vogelsang area is one of these areas. Close the Vogelsang HSC and let the birds sing again.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Renton, WA

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"Joshua Stark"
 <jstark@NPCA.ORG>
 02/13/2008 10:29 PM
 EST

To: <Yose_Planning@nps.gov>
 cc:
 Subject: NPCA comments to Vogelsang High Sierra Camp

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VBCU-36-S
FEB 14 2008
P. 10/3
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent,

Attached you will find comments from the National Parks Conservation Association regarding the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Utilities Project. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact our Stockton field office via email or telephone listed below.

Sincerely,

Joshua Stark
 Stockton Program Manager

National Parks Conservation Association
 Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations
 445 W. Weber Avenue, Ste. 138
 Stockton, Ca. 95203-3147
 fax> 209.932.1340

c> 209.403.3573
 e> jstark@npca.org
 w> www.npca.org



VOGELSANG HIGH SIERRA CAMP.doc

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P-283

VOGELSANG HIGH SIERRA CAMP (VHSC) UTILITIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The National Parks Conservation Association greatly appreciates the ability to comment on proposed improvements to the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp. These comments are listed in three parts, to address the three separate projects in the proposal.

Vogelsang HSC Water System Upgrade Project

The 300 gallon plastic tank needs to be removed. NPCA suggests studies to determine the possibility of repairing the 2,000 gallon water storage tank which currently leaks.

With regards to the disinfection system, NPCA recommends NPS conduct research on the feasibility and desirability of appropriate measures in a backcountry setting. As this is potential wilderness, completely surrounded by a wilderness area, NPCA questions the need, long-term efficacy and the appropriateness for chlorine or other water treatment systems.

Related to this, it is also appropriate for the Park Service to reconsider the amount of service VHSC currently requires, with a desired outcome being to scale back the numbers of stock trips carrying linens and other service items. Though popular for some, stock use through wilderness is controversial at best.

Wastewater Upgrade Project

The wastewater upgrade project is a complicated rehabilitation project fraught with potential pitfalls. The nature of the substrate makes for inappropriate leach fields without considerable movement of earth.

NPCA recommends studying the potential for retrofitting the dosing tank to get it to work properly. NPCA also recommends a study to consider the ability to engineer a leach field through piling a sufficient amount of dirt. This study needs to be conducted bearing in mind the needs and protections of backcountry wilderness. Therefore, if borrow pits may be used, they must maintain soil consistency (organic matter, minerals, etc.) as similar to the region as possible. In particular, the soil must not contain the potential for invasive species.

Related to this, the Park Service needs to consider the minimum tool requirement in getting this material to the site.

It may be most appropriate for the Park Service to begin scaling back the amount of retrofitting of VHSC, in light of the amount of total impact to the region, nearby designated wilderness, the local watershed, and the park resources (money, time, and impact to resource in retrofitting vs. scaling back use).

Replacement of the Backpackers Camp Composter

In light of the User Capacity Symposium at Yosemite National Park in February, 2008, NPCA believes that the Park Service should conduct further study into the efficacy of a composting toilet system, but in reference to the US Forest Service's removal of toilets on the Mt. Whitney trail. The impact on the resource has been minimal, through effective encouraging of packing out of waste by backpackers. It seems that in the case of the trails through and to Vogelsang, the potential for encouraging packing out may be similar, and bear similar positive results.

In the event that the park service should determine to replace the composting toilets, instead of removing them, NPCA strongly believes that the footprint must be similar to the existing structures, with enough room to accommodate ADA requirements. Cedar, or other marmot-resistant, appropriate materials should be used for construction.

CONCLUSION

It may be appropriate for the Park Service to begin scaling back the amount of services required to keep the VHSC operating as it has in the past. This may lessen the amount of stock use allowed, but it may free up the park to better protect the resource.



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To: <YOSE_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Scoping Comment Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project

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VBCU-37-S
FEB 14 2008

P. 1072

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



Santa Fe, NM 87507

14 February 2008

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Attn: Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project

P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Superintendent,

The following are scoping comments on the proposed Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project.

I have hiked and backpacked the trail from Tuolumne Meadows to Vogelsang many times going as far back as the sixties. Even back then it was unpleasant and became more so a time went on due to the degradation of the trail and the accumulation of manure. The smell was bad, unbecoming a wilderness character area, and the realization that manured dust was being inhaled was repulsive. These violations of wilderness character were primarily due to the frequent horse and mule pack trains using the trail to supply and service Vogelsang High Sierra Camp. Also the character of the area around the camp deteriorated over time.

Fortunately, environmental consciousness has increased over that time period also. The always controversial Camps are now clearly an anachronism that need to be removed, particularly the Vogelsang Camp due to the harm that it has done to the area, which is now apparently reached the point where its continued existence would require an extensive construction project, which is clearly not allowed by the General Management Plan for Yosemite and the California Wilderness Act of 1984.

I am appalled that the Yosemite Park Service proposes continuing the existence of Vogelsang Camp much less additions to it. My understanding is the service aspect of the Service is to serve the public's enjoyment of the National Park qualities of the Park, not disturb them by Established Camps, especially when there is an increasing population wishing to enjoy that wilderness character, and not to curry favor

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