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cc: "goodrosen@comcast.net" <goodrosen@comcast.net> (Receipt
Notification Requested) (IPM Return Requested), (bcc: Kristina
Rylands/YOSE/NPS)
Subject: RE: Trail Repair Language

Sharon and Julia -

Thank you for your August 7 letter. While the defendants generally are willing to agree to postpone onsite activity within the Merced River corridor for the projects listed until the court rules, we do not agree that the repair and maintenance work on the loop trail scheduled for this fall should be included on that list.

After reviewing your letter, the park realized that you have an incorrect understanding of the very limited nature of the minor repairs that are scheduled for this fall. To correct that misunderstanding, the park has provided the following description of the work being undertaken, along with a reference to the categorical exclusion that applies to all trail maintenance. The park has explained as follows:

"Yosemite Valley Loop Trail Repairs

Beginning in October 2006, NPS crews will begin repairing existing Yosemite Valley trails. Repairs will primarily focus on existing masonry structures, including deteriorated retaining walls and drainage features. All structures will be repaired in kind to their historic alignment and character. These activities do not implement the trail improvements outlined in the Yosemite Valley Plan, do not change access to other parts of Yosemite Valley, will not change the grade or alignment. They are simply repairs in kind to existing trails. Masonry work will recess for the winter season in December 2006 and will resume in March 2007.

Environmental compliance for this maintenance activity falls under the programmatic Categorical Exclusion that applies to all trail maintenance and repair efforts in the park (CE 2004-057, as amended in CE 2005-090). Again, the work getting underway this fall is not related to the multi-use paved trail outlined in Yosemite Valley Plan (as characterized in your August 7, 2006 letter)."

As this explanation indicates, the trail repair and maintenance this fall will not include paving, nor will it include the "new multi-use trail" discussed in the Yosemite Valley Plan to which you refer. Before any such new work on the loop trail is undertaken, the park will prepare the appropriate NEPA compliance document. No such activity, however, is proposed for the remainder of 2006. The park feels strongly that these repairs and maintenance should be undertaken without further delay.

If the plaintiffs will agree to drop the loop trail repairs from the stipulation, the defendants will agree to provide you with 30 days' advance notice of any other projects planned prior to the hearing, although we are not aware of any such additional projects at this time.

Charlie