

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Wawona Archeological District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Box 577

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

CA 95389

CODE

06

COUNTY

Mariposa

CODE

043

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" 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 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Western Regional Office - National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

— VICINITY OF

STATE

CA 94102

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Western Archeological Center

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 49008

CITY, TOWN

Tucson, AZ 85717

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Archeological Survey in Yosemite National Park, L. K. Napton

Archeological Survey in Selected Areas of Yosemite National Park, J. A.

DATE

1975, 1953

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

/Bennyhoff

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

¹ California State College, Stanislaus; ² University of California,

CITY, TOWN

/ Berkeley; ³ WAC/

STATE

1 - Turlock, CA 2 - Berkeley, CA 3 - Tucson, AZ

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Wawona Archeological District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN	_____ VICINITY OF	COUNTY	STATE
Yosemite National Park		Mariposa	CA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE USGS Yosemite, California
N3730-W11930/15

SCALE 1:62,500 DATE 1956

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wawona Archeological District is located within a wide area in the canyon of the south fork of the Merced River in the southern portion of Yosemite National Park. South of the river, the canyon opens into an extensive bowl-shaped valley drained by Meadow Creek. This meadow is at the same altitude as Yosemite Valley, 4000 to 4500 feet above sea level, and may be the remains of a glacial lake. Although Wawona does not have the steep cliffs of Yosemite, remnant terraces and ridges parallel the valley and provide excellent site locations. Toward the northwest, the valley narrows to a width of 1/2 mile and eventually the river enters a narrow gorge. Prehistorically, access to Wawona would have been difficult through either the upper or lower river canyons, but Meadow Creek, Big Creek, Rush Creek, and Chinaulna Creek would have provided entry from the south, southwest, or northeast.

Although Wawona is in many respects similar to Yosemite Valley, two factors influence the difference in site locations in the two areas. Unlike Yosemite, Wawona has no talus boulders or springs, thus sites are mainly located on the river and its tributaries. Bedrock mortars are apt to occur in the river channel itself and are only visible during the late summer and fall, when the river is low.

Wawona is in the Upper Sonoran transition zone, which is characterized by several species of oak, one of the principal food sources of the Miwok Indians inhabiting Yosemite National Park in historic times. In addition to Black Oak, the upper story includes pine, cedar and fir. The understory consists of manzanita, Holly Leaf red berry and azalea. Ground cover includes bunch grasses, lupine, mountain misery, iris, bracken fern and mariposa lily. Willows along the stream edges would have provided excellent browse for deer. Along with a variety of rodents and birds, numerous small very tame deer inhabit the area. The Wawona area is sheltered from harsh winds and extreme climatic conditions by the surrounding ranges, thus the climate would allow year-round occupation.

Within the Wawona District, archeological investigations have been restricted to surveys. In 1954 Gordon L. Grosscup from the University of California at Berkeley conducted a restricted survey and recorded several sites previously visited by Park Naturalist R. McIntyre as well as a number of unrecorded cultural areas. This information was incorporated into Bennyhoff's 1956 report. In addition, there are several isolated reports of single sites such as 4-MRP-328 by Remjul. In 1974-75 the Wawona area was intensively surveyed by CSCS/IAR. The 1974 survey covered 3500 acres of Wawona Meadow and most habitable terrain along both sides of the river. During this survey 17 UCB sites were relocated and another 17 new sites recorded. In 1975 the survey area was extended both upstream and down and five previously recorded and three new sites were added to the inventory.

Although no excavation has been carried out in Wawona itself, test excavations were carried out at 4-MRP-9 by Bennyhoff (1956). This site is located at the confluence of Laurel Creek and Big Creek, approximately three miles south of Wawona and thus may be indicative of the subsurface remains in Wawona itself. The upper levels contained protohistoric material while Class C projectile points, manos, and metates from the deeper levels indicated an earlier occupation.

The 42 sites recorded in the Wawona Archeological District vary in size and feature. At least 12 fall into Bennyhoff's (1956) large village category by having over 25 bedrock mortar cups with associated midden deposits. 4-MRP-8 is notable for its 75 bedrock

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mortar cups and midden with burned bone and fire-cracked rock. The sites range from rock shelters (4-MRP-219) to light lithic scatters, with both bedrock mortars and midden deposits occurring at the majority. Often the sites occur in groups such as the Wawona Village Cluster (4-MRP-174, 332, and 333). Generally, the sites can be characterized as being food processing sites which were occupied on an annual basis during the late summer and early fall when the river was low and the acorns ripened. Although there is no proof of year-round occupation at Wawona in the ethnographic literature or by surface indications of housepits, the climate would have permitted it. When the Fresno and Merced areas were closed by Anglos, this was one of the locations where Indians could have wintered in historic times. This can only be determined through future excavations.

Bennyhoff (1956) has tentatively identified three complexes in his excavations in the Yosemite National Park region. The separation of the Mariposa (A.D. 1200-1850), the Tamarack (A.D. 500-1200), and the Crane Flat (pre-A.D. 500) complexes is based upon changes in form of chipped stone tools and grinding implements. Fitzwater (1962) has assigned an earlier initial date of 2000 B.C. to the Crane Flat Complex on the basis of excavations at 4-MRP-181. He found no evidence for the Tamarack Complex at this site and extended the terminal date for the Mariposa Complex from A.D. 1850 to 1900. The Mariposa Complex represents the occupation of the area by the Central and Southern Miwok. A single ethnographic site has been mentioned (Kroeber 1925) for Wawona. The southern Miwok village of Palachan was located at the confluence of Big Creek and the south fork of the Merced. It cannot be exactly correlated with any known archeological remains and may have been located beneath a modern sewage settling pond.

Historic Anglo occupations have been intensive in the Wawona district. The town of Wawona is a community development which began in the late 1800s. The Wawona Hotel complex and pavilion have already been placed on the National Register, while 15 structures in the Pioneer Yosemite History Center and the Galen Clark Homestead Historic site are in the process of being nominated to the National Register. Other historic Anglo remains which are part of this nomination include, specifically, the Stella Lake icehouse complex and various historic trash dumps in the Wawona district.

The Stella Lake icehouse complex is situated on the eastern side of the Wawona district east of the Wawona hotel. The now-dry lake has a NE-SW axis and is approximately 200 feet wide by 1000 feet long. A linear flat-topped earthen dike separates the lake bed from the South Fork of the Merced River and is breached by a covered overflow channel made from 2 x 12 planks, a badly damaged headgate through which passes a small creek, and a large naturally eroded break-through which has removed an entire section of the dike. At the northeast end of the lake bed, a three-sided structural foundation constructed of stacked small boulders encloses an area about 50 x 50 feet. This is thought to be the icehouse. A small stream runs along the edge of a hill slope at the northeast end of the lake and has been channeled by the construction of a low dike which terminates with a small headgate a few feet away from the headgate of the main dike. The creek could be channeled into the lake through the smaller headgate but now flows into the river through the larger damaged headgate. At the southwestern end of the lake, a stacked stone masonry dike forms one angle of the total enclosed lake area. The remnants of the lift mechanism may be seen at the eastern end of this dike. These remnants consist of a 28

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foot long trough formed by 2 x 12 inch planks in which a smaller trough made from 1 x 12 inch boards has been installed. The bottom of this smaller trough is composed of 2 x 2 inch runner boards set an inch or so apart with metal strips attached to the top surface. At least one 10-inch cogwheel remains in place at the end of the smaller trough. This mechanism and the 4 x 4 inch headframes at either end of the troughs constitutes the "Persian Wheel" lifting system by which the blocks of ice were moved. Presently, the mechanism is mostly intact but many of the planks and boards are rotting away.

Other historic remains in the Wawona district consist primarily of refuse disposal areas. Little is known of the contents of these refuse areas, with the exception of a butcher shop dump located near an outbuilding which is used for the storage of maintenance equipment for the golf course. It should be noted that, while precise locations of these refuse areas are lacking, any refuse dumps located in the district are included in this nomination.

There are also large parcels of private inholdings whose titles were granted prior to the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890. There is a village area of private dwellings, gas station, store and hotel, vacation homes, golf course and Seventh Day Adventist church camp. Government development includes the pioneer history center, large campground and numerous service facilities. These activities have resulted in fragmented archeological sites and the collection of many surface artifacts. But since the majority of the buildings are surface structures, subsurface midden deposits have been left undisturbed.

Since within this District are a number of privately owned structures on Federal lands and several commercial establishments on private lands, the Park Service must uphold certain legal rights of these private owners. However, if known archeological resources are in close proximity to a federally owned structure or land for which alterations, expansion or removal is proposed, the Superintendent will consult with the Regional Director in a determination of effect or no effect upon the cultural materials according to CFR Part 800.4-.5. Disruption of previously altered ground areas, as in the removal of below grade foundations, utility lines, or structural elements does not constitute disturbance of new ground only if no cultural resources are identified as being in close proximity to a removal project. The Superintendent will consult with the Regional Director as to determinations of effect or no effect upon cultural materials prior to removal actions. The most recent archeological site inventory records will provide data as to site locations and relative sensitivity for cultural resources in proximity to existing developments. If cultural materials not known are discovered during removal or alteration actions, activities should cease and professional archeological evaluations be made for data recovery.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
X-PREHISTORIC	X-ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	X-ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X-1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X-1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The archeological resources of the Wawona District have significance at the state and regional levels. They have potential for providing information pertaining to subsistence strategies, seasonal use of specific ecological zones, demographic patterns, and both historic Miwok and pre-Miwok occupation of the Yosemite area.

The archeology of the district represents National Park Service themes 1a4 (The Earliest Americans - Archaic Indian Horizon) and 1c1 (Indian Meets European - Indian Life at Time of Contact with the European).

The majority of the 42 sites located within the Wawona area consist of bedrock mortar groups, with associated midden deposits or surface scatters of lithic debitage. Although no house pits are indicated by the surface remains, future archeological investigations, particularly in the larger sites, may yield evidence of year-round occupation. The climate of Wawona and the richness of the midden deposits would make this feasible.

The sites in Wawona have additional potential for yielding information on pre-Miwok occupation of the Yosemite area. Stratigraphic testing of 4-MRP-9, immediately south of the Wawona area (Bennyhoff 1956), produced evidence for an earlier occupation in the form of diagnostic projectile point types, manos and metates. It is to be assumed that this occupation can also be found in the deeper midden levels at Wawona and, with more careful excavation techniques, be more clearly defined.

Bennyhoff's settlement pattern model (1956) indicates that the Upper Sonoran Zone is the most favorable for settlement, with the most year-round variety of resources; thus, a larger number of permanent and semi-permanent settlements will be found in these areas, such as Yosemite Valley and Wawona. From surface indications and comparisons with other ecological zones in Yosemite, such as Tuolumne Meadows, it would appear that Bennyhoff's model is valid. Detailed chronological and demographic studies are needed to confirm these preliminary observations. Nearest neighbor analysis, particularly of village clusters, could give valuable insight into population and settlement trends. Comparable data is available from Millerton Lake, Buchanan, Don Pedro and Hidden Reservoirs, the Lake Tahoe area and Huntington Lake.

Abundant data on the natural resources used by prehistoric groups and the seasonal round they engaged in can be extracted from the stratified midden deposits of the Wawona area through flotation, pollen, paleoscatological and faunal analysis. These data would also be important to geologists, zoologists, and climatologists in the reconstruction of paleoenvironmental conditions. Both surface scatters and middens can provide material pertinent to raw material preferences and trade relationships by means of trace element analysis. Detailed mapping of surface scatters and analysis of the reduction and edge wear patterns of lithic material should give indications of types of activities carried out at the locality.

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The sites in the Wawona District hold potential for assessing the impact of European contact upon the material culture and life style of historic Miwok Indians. At least one ethnographic site, Palchan, is mentioned in Kroeber (1925) as being located within the district, and it would have been an ideal wintering area for groups fleeing from Anglo incursions. While this site has probably been altered due to recent construction activities, these remains would be of ethnic significance to contemporary Native American Indian groups. Historic Indian sites can give valuable information on the substitution of manufactured for native items, changes in diet and the pattern of the yearly round.

Site 4-MRP-8 holds great potential for an interpretive research and demonstration exhibit. Located near the Pioneer Center and District Ranger Station it is a well preserved occupation and bedrock mortar site, with at least 75 BRM cups, associated pestles and milling implements, extensive lithic scatters and midden containing fire-cracked rock, calcined bone and thermally altered soil. Professional excavation is not recommended at this site. Instead, non-disruptive interpretation of these remains is suggested.

Remains from historic Anglo occupations in the district are significant in that they constitute one of the earlier examples of town development and commercial hotelier industry available from the eastern Sierra region. Records are also available pertaining to the development and expansion of Wawona. As a result, historic Anglo remains are well suited to the development of a comprehensive interpretive program.

The archeological remains at Wawona are most vulnerable to subsurface disturbance. Construction of the golf course has obliterated most of 4-MRP-170, and 4-MRP-330 has been removed with a gravel pit. Visitor traffic and construction activities have also fragmented sites and disturbed the pattern of surface scatters. Effort should be made to keep such disturbance at a minimum.

Since with the archeological district there are a number of private inholdings, the National Park Service must uphold certain legal rights of these private owners. In order to prevent interference with these rights and to avoid unnecessary management problems, actions taken with the district not requiring approval of the park superintendent and not in proximity to known sites will not necessitate Section 106 (Historic Preservation Act of 1966) procedures. If actions require superintendent approval and if known archeological resources are on or in close proximity to a structure or land proposed for alterations, expansion or removal, the Superintendent will consult with the Regional Director in a determination of effect or no effect upon cultural materials. Disruption of previously altered ground areas, as in the removal of below grade foundations, utility lines, or structural elements does not constitute disturbance of new ground only if no cultural resources are identified as in close proximity to a removal project. The most recent archeological site inventory records will provide data as to site locations and relative sensitivity for cultural resources in proximity to existing developments. If cultural materials not known are discovered during removal or alteration actions, work should cease and professional archeological evaluation be made for the recovery of cultural data.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Napton, L. K.

1965 Archeological Survey in Yosemite National Park, California: Wawona I, Wawona II. CSCS/IAR, Turlock.

1976 Archaeological Investigations in Yosemite National Park, California, Part I Project Summary. Part 7, Wawona and Mariposa Grove. CSCS/IAR, Turlock.

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4,940

E. 1 1/ 2 7 0 3 2 0/ 4 1 5 7 2 5 0

F. 1 1/ 2 6 6 6 7 5/ 4 1 5 5 4 7 5

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 0 | | 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 5 |

B | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 0 | | 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 5 |

C | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | | 4 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 5 |

D | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 0 | | 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 0 |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Wawona Archeological District generally fall below the 4,400 foot elevation mark. The western portion follows the Merced River below this mark and the easternmost point is where the 4,400 foot mark crosses the Merced River. Where the valley opens out, the district boundaries continue to follow these contour lines.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
California	06	Mariposa	043
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Nancy S. Hammack, Archeologist

ORGANIZATION

Western Archeological Center - National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 49008

DATE

TELEPHONE FTS: 762-6501

602-792-6501

CITY OR TOWN

Tucson, AZ 85717

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER 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

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Bennyhoff, J. A.
 1956 An Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Yosemite National Park.
 University of California Archeological Survey Report #34. Berkeley.