



Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project

Project Background

Vogelsang High Sierra Camp (VHSC) is the highest of Yosemite's five high sierra camps at 10,300 feet. The camp is located approximately 7.5 miles south of the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge and the Tioga Road. VHSC was established in 1923 on the shores of Booth Lake. The camp's present location on Fletcher Creek was established in 1940.

The Vogelsang Backpacker's Camp is located near Fletcher Lake approximately 0.2 miles northeast of the VHSC. The proposed project includes rehabilitation and repair projects within the VHSC and the adjacent Backpacker's Camp.



Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Below Fletcher Peak.

What is the purpose and need of this project?

The purpose for the Vogelsang Backcountry Utility Improvement project is to address public health and safety issues and water quality issues resulting from utility deficiencies at the VHSC and Backpacker's Camp. The deficiencies exist for a variety of reasons including new state and federal regulatory requirements, and age and deterioration of existing facilities.

Operation and maintenance of utility systems that serve Yosemite's HSC and adjacent Backpacker's Camps has proven challenging. These facilities are subject to many increasingly stringent public health, water quality, and safety regulations. Compliance with these regulations is complicated by the remoteness of the facilities and designation of the HSC as Potential Wilderness Additions. All activities must be in compliance with the regulations and policies established to protect Wilderness values and must meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area. Additionally, implementation of the project should not result in an overall increase in adverse impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) to the natural environment.

VHSC Backpacker's Camp Composter System Upgrade:

The camp includes a composting toilet, built in 1984, and bear boxes for food storage. The composting toilet has been closed since 2004 due to extensive damage caused by marmots and deteriorated with aged. Since closure, backpackers have either been burying their waste following Leave No Trace practices, or using the adjacent HSC composting toilet.

VHSC Water System Improvement:

The Public water supply for the camp is supplied by a spring located at the base of Fletcher Peak and is stored in a 300 gallon temporary plastic storage tank. A 2,000 gallon concrete storage tank, constructed in 1963, was used until it began to leak in 2000. The 300 gallon tank does not provide adequate storage. The water supply is not deficient for the following reasons::

- National Park Service's Public Health Program requires that public water supplies be disinfected.
- CDHS regulations require that the National Park Service have an immediately implementable emergency disinfection system or plan in place.
- The spring is currently regulated as a ground water source. The National Park Service is continuing to monitor the system to determine if the spring is under direct influence of surface water. If surface water is influencing the spring additional treatment will be

VHSC Wastewater System Improvement:

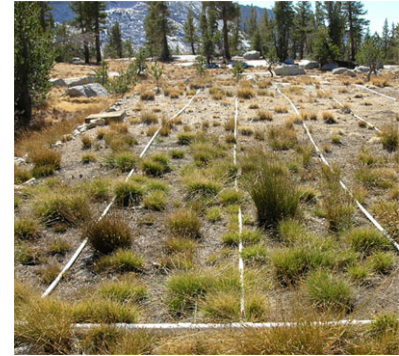
Original wastewater facilities at VHSC consisted of pit toilets. These were replaced with flush toilets and a cesspool. In 1963, a septic tank and leach field system was constructed. This system has evolved over the years and today is comprised of a septic tank, dosing tank, and mound leachfield. Wastewater from the kitchen, staff showers, and guest hand washing stations are treated by this system. Human waste is treated by four composting toilets built in 1993.



Above: Raised mound system; Below: Surface drip system

The wastewater disposal system at the VHSC is not meeting the Regional Water Quality Control Board treatment standards for the following reasons:

- VHSC dosing tank leaks and does not dose properly.
- The leachfield does not provide adequate treatment and wastewater has been found to leak out from the low end of the mound.
- Currently, the system consists of PVC piping laid



Alternatives Development:

Public scoping was held from January 15 through February 15, 2008. The National Park Service received 66 responses from individuals and organizations. These public responses have been analyzed for individual ideas known as public comments. The public comments are then grouped into what are called concern statements. The public concerns identify common themes expressed by individuals or groups requesting particular lines of action by the National Park Service. The public concerns were then screened to determine whether a concern pertains to the purpose and need of the project and the level of action required by the park staff. Park management and staff are reviewing and discussing the range of public interests and concerns. These issues and concerns are being used to aide in the development of a range of alternatives that address the purpose and need of the proposed action.

Timeline

Public scoping

Environmental Assessment anticipated for public comment

January 15- February 15, 2008

Fall 2008

Public Participation

Public participation is essential for the success of this and all other park projects.

- Here are some ways to stay involved in the future of the park:
Attend a National Park Service public open house to talk with project specialists and obtain more information on this and other topics. 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.
- **Additionally, you can submit comments** with your thoughts about this topic or any other project in the park by any of the following means:
 - **Mail:** Superintendent
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/planning.htm to find out about plans and projects.