

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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August 23, 2004

Dr. Stephanie Toothman
National Park Service
Pacific West Region
909 First Street
Seattle, Washington 98104-4159

Dear Dr. Toothman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register Multiple Property nomination for Yosemite National Park. I concur that the properties identified and evaluated in the nomination do constitute a coherent group of geographically dispersed resources that are eligible for listing in the National Register. The nomination does an excellent job of defining separate, but related contexts that make clear the significance of the individual resources, as well as the reasons that they collectively constitute a multiple property. The inclusion of a number of the park's less elaborate, high altitude resources is particularly noteworthy. The context statements synthesize a large amount of historic documentation in a clear and concise manner and the descriptive material that is provided for the individual resources or resource groupings is excellent.

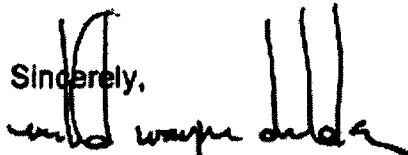
We concur in all of your findings regarding the resources enumerated in the multiple property nomination. We agree that the following properties are eligible for the National Register as a part of a multiple property.

Lake Vernon Cabin Building #2450
May Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District
Hetch Hetchy Comfort Station Building #2104
Henness Ridge Fire Lookout Building #5300
The Golden Crown Mine
Glen Aulin Sierra Camp Historic District
Chinquapin Historic District
Buck Creek Cabin Building #4800
Snow Flat Cabin Building #3501
Snow Creek Cabin Building #3450
Sachse Springs Cabin Building #2452
Ostrander Ski Hut Building #5110
Old Big Oak Flat Road
New Big Oak Flat Road
Merced Lake Ranger Station Building #3400
Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Historic District

Wawona Tunnel
Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Historic District
Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp Historic District

I have signed the application as commenting authority. If you have any questions, please call
Gene Itogawa of my staff (916) 653-8936.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Milford Wayne Donaldson", written over a horizontal line.

Milford Wayne Donaldson
State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Kimball Koch

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of
Property

historic name Ostrander Lake Ski Hut

other names/site number Ostrander Ski Hut; Building #5110

2.
Location

street & number N/A not for publication ☐

city or town Yosemite National Park (YOSE) vicinity

state California code CA county Mariposa code 043 zip code 95389

3. State /Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
☐ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Ostrander Lake Ski Hut
Name of Property
_____ removed from the National Register
_____ other (explain): _____

Mariposa, CA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
☐ private	☒ building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
☐ public-local	☐ district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
☐ public-State	☐ site	_____	_____ sites
☒ public-Federal	☐ structure	_____	_____ structures
	☐ object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park, California

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6.Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>RECREATION AND CULTURE/</u>	<u>RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor</u>
<u>Outdoor recreation</u>	<u>recreation</u>
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
Other: <u>Late NPS Rustic</u>	foundation <u>Masonry</u>
_____	walls <u>stone: cut granite</u>
_____	_____
	roof <u>metal standing seam on log rafters</u>
	other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Ostrander Lake Ski Hut
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1940-1950

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

National Park Service; Civilian Conservation Corps

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

Primary location of additional data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Mariposa, CA

County and State

Name of repository:

Yosemite National Park, California

Record #

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 11 275100 4167275 **3**
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 _____ **4** _____
See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The National Register boundary includes only the Buck Camp cabin and its immediate surroundings.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundary includes only the historically and architecturally significant snow survey cabin and its immediate setting.

The outbuildings are of more recent origin and are not eligible for nomination on the National Register.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andy Kirk, Richard Coop, Charles Palmer

organization UNLV Public History date 3/8/04

street & number 4505 Maryland Parkway Box 455020 telephone (702)895-3544

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89135-5020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number	telephone
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1149	1149

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Ostrander Lake Ski Hut
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
County and State

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Summary

The Ostrander Lake Ski Hut, built in 1940, is a one-story rectangular building with a loft. It has load-bearing cut-stone granite walls on a masonry foundation. The metal standing-seam gable roof lies on exposed log rafters. Stone steps lead to an entryway with a wooden balcony above. Double-hung casement windows adorn the exterior. The original building dimensions are 20'-0" X 50'-2". The major axis of the building is north/south. Most of the material for the ski hut was local. Log beams for doors, railings and roof were cut and peeled nearby, then pulled into place and cut and notched to fit. The rock for the walls and steps was also local. The Civilian Conservation Corps had the advantage of being able to draw on many skilled people, including stonemasons. Two masons directed the stonework and did the finish work on the rock with many additional laborers helping. The rocks were cut with plugs and feathers and then shaped by hand. The walls were roughly coursed. Windows and doors were framed with cut stone and lintels of a single cut stone. Unlike the use of stone for facades in many Valley buildings of the rustic architecture period, the use of stone in the Ostrander Hut was structural, clearly affecting the building's character.

General Description

The Ostrander Lake Ski Hut is located on the north shore of Ostrander Lake. It is reached via a six-mile trail leading south from the Glacier Point Road near where it crosses Bridal Veil Creek. The ski hut was constructed upon the recommendation of the Yosemite Winter Activities Committee. The original plan, however, was that two huts be constructed. One would provide for people who carried their own sleeping bags and food; the other would cater to those who wished to rent bedding and purchase meals from an authorized public utility operator.

After the committee determined that it was unfeasible to construct two huts, the Park Service decided to provide both services in one hut. With the agreement of the Curry Company, the Ostrander Lake Hut was built through the cooperation of the Civilian Conservation Corps Program (CCC). It was designed to be compatible with its surroundings of a lake and rocky terrain. The building was the last structure in Yosemite National Park erected by the CCC and is an example of late NPS rustic architecture.

The interior contained sleeping and cooking facilities. Two kitchens were provided, one for public use and the other reserved for the Curry Company representative. In addition, separate quarters for the Curry Company representative were located above the kitchens. The dormitory rooms and the general public space had a status similar to that of a public campground. The Ostrander Ski Hut is currently available for overnight use. Reservations and user fees are required. In line with Yosemite National Park's Nordic Ski Plan, Nordic Rangers were assigned in the late 1970s at Badger Pass, Tuolumne Meadows, Crane Flat, Snow Creek, and Ostrander Ski Hut. The bathroom facilities have been altered within the last fifteen years.

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Significance

Property Type: Resources Associated with Tourism, Recreation and the Preservation Ethic in Yosemite (1864-1973)

Subtype: Winter Sports

Period of Significance: 1940-1950

The Ostrander Lake Ski Hut is considered significant as an integral part in the development of winter sports in Yosemite National Park and western United States. The hut was constructed as the first unit of a hut and trail system in the Badger Pass Ski Area and was considered an important part of a larger plan for winter sports development of the Sierra Crest. It was designed to be similar to a High Sierra hiker's camp, but with the intention of meeting the needs of ski tourists instead. It also has architectural significance as an example of late NPS rustic-style designed.

The most pervasive architectural style of Yosemite, Arthur Good defined rustic architecture as "the use of native materials in proper scale, and through the avoidance of rigid, straight lines, and over-sophistication, gives the feeling of having been executed by pioneer craftsman with limited hand tools. It thus achieves sympathy with natural surroundings and with the past."

Historical Context

Stephen Mather was especially interested in developing organized winter sports at Yosemite, in hopes that the park would develop into a year-round resort. This would be a distinctly middle-class development, as the wealthy elite typically preferred to spend their winters in warm weather resorts. In keeping with Mather's ideas, Curry Company President Donald Tresidder hired in 1928 a Swiss native, Ernst desBaillets, who had been successful promoting winter development at Lake Placid in New York State, to organize skiing, skating, ice hockey, and other winter sports in Yosemite.

The Yosemite Winter Club was formed in 1928 to encourage and develop all forms of winter sports. An ice rink was created in the Camp Curry Parking area. A toboggan run was built west of the camp and during the 1920s and early 1930s horses were kept for sleighing and skijoring. Stoneman Meadow, across the road from Camp Curry, became the focal point for these activities. On the Merced River, visitors participated in hockey games, curling, and speed and figure skating contests. Ice carnivals were held frequently. The moraine opposite the stables near Tenaya Creek Bridge became a temporary ski hill. Buses struggled up Big Oak Flat and Tioga Road when snow on the valley floor proved insufficient for skiing.

The construction of outlying ski huts as a part of a system of ski touring began in 1929 with the construction of Snow Creek Ski Cabin on the shoulder of Mount Watkins, that offered accommodations for sixteen people. A ski school was

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established in 1928. The program offered frequent trips to the Snow Creek Cabin with instruction along the way and climbs to higher points for thrilling downhill runs.

J.N. Hildebrand, in his *History of Skiing in California*, states that this new ski center in Badger Pass proved one of the strongest influences in the state for the development of skiing. Don Tresidder, Curry Company president, has been credited for making outstanding contributions to the growth of the sport in California by furnishing excellent instruction through the Yosemite ski school. The Badger Pass area opened after construction Wawona Road and Tunnel. This enabled access to Chinquapin and Monroe Meadow. Curry Company employees also scouted the region between Glacier Point, Badger Pass, Cinquapin, Ostrander Lake, and Inspiration Point to assess other ski possibilities. In late January 1936 the directors of Yosemite Park and Curry Company sent Mr. & Mrs. Tressider abroad to study winter alpine resorts and to gain ideas for new structures and sports opportunities.

In May 1938 the Tressiders camped over night at the foot of Horizon Ridge on their way to Ostrander Lake to explore new ski terrain. The area seemed ideal for this type of activity. The Ostrander Ski Hut was built by the National Park Service in 1940, with CCC labor, as a touring shelter. The ski hut was designed as a center for Nordic skiing, offering a people an alternative to lift-served slopes.

The trail and hut system provided for in the National Park Services winter sports policy stressed ski touring as the most appropriate type of winter use for the National Parks because it made available the scenic grandeur for which those National Parks had been established. A memorandum from the Park Service director on February 7, 1940 stated, "The trend of skiing appears to be away from the continuous repetition of downhill runs. Primary consideration, therefore, should be given to the study of system of ski trails, huts, and shelters." The plan for providing facilities and activities necessary to encourage ski touring construction of short, scenic trails for day trips; organized tours by the NPS on those trails; inclusion of touring techniques in ski instruction; provision of touring maps and equipment; and construction of a hut and trail system following the open, rounded ridges of the valley's southern rim crest.

The NPS believed that huts providing overnight housing in Yosemite should be located in regions of superlative ski terrain and scenic beauty at intersections of probable future trails. Originally, plans called for construction of two huts, the first to be operated by the concessionaire and the second by the government. These would be experimental structures, the first units in a more extensive development. One hut would be on or near Ostrander Lake, providing access to the skiing terrain at Horse Ridge and Buena Vista Peak and forming a junction with the Horizon Hill Trail. Another hut would be near the timberline in the middle of the bowl under Buena Vista Crest. In accordance with NPS policy all ski shelters would be constructed by the government and it was recommended that consideration be giving to using the plans for such shelters prepared by the San Francisco Design Office of the NPS.

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Initially it was thought that the Buena Vista Hut should be constructed by the NPS and operated without an attendant, providing only bunks and wood, and that the Ostrander Lake hut be operated by the concessionaire. The reason for the different character of each stemmed from the decision by the Curry Company and the NPS that facilities should be provided for two types of ski tourists: those not owning the necessary equipment and wanting it to be provided, similar to High Sierra Hiker's Camp, and those who preferred carrying their own sleeping bags and other equipment for cross-country tours. It was decided that further extension of the hut and trail system across the dark Range or in other directions would await public demand and more studies of route and hut locations as well as determination of any problems arising in the operation of the initial units.

Two huts seemed too ambitious, so the plan was narrowed to one hut that would provide both types of service required by skiers. Two kitchens were provided, one for operation on High Sierra Camp basis, the other for use without charge. The dorm rooms and any open space were for the use of the general public, although the capacity of the hut was fixed. The representatives of the Curry Company took care of clean-up work in the general public space. Reservations in advance were required. Quarters above the two kitchens were reserved for Curry Company representatives.

The design of the Ostrander Ski Hut was based on several needs. The NPS landscape division wanted an attractive building while the discussion showed that potential fire hazards and maintenance needs showed a metal roof desirable. The building also needed to be weather-tight and have a high entrance so that it would not be inaccessible in winter snows. In addition, the hut needed to be compatible with its surroundings regardless of season. To meet this criterion, no standard of design was sacrificed during construction.

The significance of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company's fostering of winter sports development in California through their offering of winter activities has been fully recognized. J.E. Carpenter, in his *California Winter Sports*, describes Yosemite's role in California skiing development,

During the formative days of winter sports development only a few enterprises made any contribution to or furnished any leadership in the field of skiing. Of these, the Yosemite Park and Curry Company are the most outstanding, largely because of the intense interest taken by Dr. Don and Mary Curry Tressider who were great outdoor enthusiasts and skiers and skaters. Yosemite has continued to make new and extensive improvements for the pleasure and convenience of winter visitors . . .

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Yosemite, a pioneer in the winter sports field, still furnishes one of the oldest and largest centers for the ski enthusiast.

As an integral part of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company’s famous ski program the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut is a significant recreational resource.

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Bibliography

Advisory Board Correspondence and Files, 1940, Box 10, Yosemite Research Library and Records Center.

Badger Pass Development, Box 29, YRL-RC.

Carpenter, Jerry. *California Winter Sports*. San Francisco: Fearon Publishers, 1958.

Finley, Michael V., Superintendent, Yosemite National Park to Regional Director, Western Region “Review of National Register forms for factual data,” September 7, 1989.

Hildebrand, J.N. “History of Skiing in California”. *British Ski Yearbook* 10, no. 20 (1939).

McClelland, Linda Flint. *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Yosemite Park and Curry Company Records. Box 47, YRL-RC.