

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



494

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Half Dome Cables and Trail

other names/site number South Dome Cables and Trail; Tissiack Cables and Trail

2. Location

street & number Yosemite National Park not for publication

city or town N/A 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, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Robert A. Mott Chief Historian Deputy FPO 6/25/2012
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

National Park Service
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

William Wayne Gifford 19 DEC 2011
Signature of commenting official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer California State Office of Historic Preservation
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

[Signature] 8/15/2012
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Half Dome Cables and Trail
 Name of Property

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 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
2	1	sites
		structures
		objects
3	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related

TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

LANDSCAPE/natural feature

LANDSCAPE/natural feature

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Naturalistic Landscape Design

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: stone (granite), steel cable, steel pipe

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary

The Half Dome Cables and Trail is a historic climbing route and modern day trail corridor that ascends the eastern flank of Half Dome, which is a granite dome that looms nearly 5000 feet above Yosemite Valley in Yosemite National Park. Half Dome is arguably Yosemite National Park's most familiar and photogenic rock formation, and the ever-popular Half Dome Cables and Trail allows visitors access to its summit. The property is roughly 3800 feet in length, and is comprised of three distinct trail segments: the switchbacks, the saddle, and the cables. The property contains three contributing resources (Half Dome trail alignment, Sub Dome granite stone masonry steps and retaining walls, and Anderson Memorial Arch ruins) and one non-contributing resource (Half Dome cables and stanchions). Although the Half Dome cables and stanchions were replaced in 1984 and are non-contributing, they maintain their original design, location, and material composition and are therefore compatible within the historic district. The property is in good condition, and maintains a high degree of integrity in location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association but has substantially diminished integrity of materials. The new materials that have been introduced, including steel cables, steel stanchions and stone work, have been compatible with the property's historic character.

Narrative Description

Today, the Half Dome cables and trail remain much as they did in 1919. This route is located along the eastern incline of Half Dome and traverses polished granite for much of its length, at slopes sometimes exceeding 50 degrees. The historic location of the stairway switchbacks leading to the cables and the cables themselves have not changed. The design of the route remains true to the 1919 installation by the Sierra Club as a granite switchback stairway leading to a pair of steel cables up Half Dome. The setting of the Half Dome cables and trail remains unchanged; it is situated in an otherwise undeveloped part of Yosemite's wilderness, towering above the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley. Historic workmanship is evidenced through dry-laid stone masonry and through the many George Anderson and Sierra Club era drill holes that follow the alignment of the cables. The historic feelings of adventure, exploration, and triumph are still experienced by those who ascend the Half Dome cables. Finally, this route conveys a direct and tangible association to the site's significance in recreation, transportation, and invention and to its association with George Anderson. This popular hike has captured the imagination of Yosemite visitors since George Anderson first ascended the granite monolith in 1875 and it remains a definitive experience for park visitors today.

The 1919 George Anderson memorial plaque at the foot of the stairway has been removed along with its accompanying memorial arch. Only the hewn stone foundation blocks of the arch remain. The steel cables and their associated hardware have been replaced entirely on two occasions and partially on a third occasion since they were installed; they were partially replaced by the NPS in 1920, entirely replaced by the CCC in 1934, and entirely replaced by Yosemite Trail Crews in 1984.¹ Although the stanchions that support the cables were designed to be removed each winter, during the first year (1920) they were not removed and they were damaged by an avalanche. Roughly 100 feet worth of stanchions were uprooted and carried away by an avalanche. The cables themselves, however, were undamaged and were reused when the Park Service made necessary repairs the following spring.² In 1934, the CCC replaced the original cable, which was between 3/8 and 3/4 inches in diameter, with 7/8 inch cable and installed new stanchions.³ The re-cabling in 1984 involved replacing the 7/8 inch cable with 5/8 inch cable, drilling some new holes, and replacing the cable and stanchions along the original alignment.⁴ The work performed by the CCC in 1934 and by the Yosemite Trail Crews in 1984 did not change the design or location of the cables or add any new infrastructure. Although some small modifications were made to the diameter of the cable used, the replacements were made using the original material (steel) and maintained the original alignment of the trail.

¹ United States National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, *George Anderson's 1875 Ascent of Half Dome and the Building of the Half Dome Trail: Historical Overview and Project Recommendations*.

² *Sierra Club Bulletin: Notes and Correspondence*, Vol. 11, No. 2, January 1921, 201.

³ Linda Greene, *Historic Resources Study, Yosemite: The Park and its Resources*, 770. Also, see the design drawings for the Half Dome Stairway by C.T. Gutleben in the Historic Photographs section of this National Register nomination and in the Yosemite Research Library.

⁴ Jose Lopez, Yosemite Trail Crew Foreman, Phone Conversation with Historical Landscape Architect Daniel Schaible, November 16, 2010.

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In 1972 and 2005, repairs were made to the switchback section of the trail on Sub Dome. This work involved adding new steps where needed and some regrading, but efforts were made to preserve the original character of the trail by preserving the trail's historic alignment and by using compatible, locally sourced material.⁵ In keeping with the trail's original design intent, the stanchions and wood crosspieces are taken down from about September or October until Memorial Day to protect the cables from damage caused by winter ice and snow.

Unlike the cables installation of 1919, there are few remains of George Anderson's 1875 ascent. The only physical evidence are numerous 5/8 inch diameter drill holes, one of which has a sawn off bolt in it that is likely a remnant bolt from Anderson's inaugural climb. There are no longer any of Anderson's complete eyebolts embedded in the granite. These eyebolts were likely knocked loose by winter avalanches or removed by the Sierra Club in 1919 with the installation of the cables. Three of Anderson's eyebolts belong to museum collections today. Two were donated to the Yosemite National Park museum collection by the Sierra Club in 1920 and the third is housed in the private collection of the Yosemite Climbing Association.

Contributing Resources

Half Dome Trail Alignment (Structure)

LCS ID: 055746, built in 1875, 1919 – contributing

The Half Dome Trail Alignment begins at the bottom of the Sub Dome switchbacks and terminates at the summit of Half Dome. This trail is roughly 3800 feet in length and has over 900 feet in elevation gain. The Half Dome trail traverses three distinct segments all of which are on their original alignment; it begins at the Sub Dome switchbacks, crosses the saddle between Sub Dome and Half Dome, and continues up the cables to the summit of Half Dome. The Sub Dome switchback segment of the trail is roughly 2600 feet in length and includes 23 switchbacks. This segment of the trail was built using a tremendous amount of locally procured granite for steps and retaining walls. All of the stone masonry is dry-laid. In some instances, the native granitic bedrock was drilled into to create steps along the trail. The switchbacks trail segment is roughly 2-4 feet wide and its surface is native decomposed granite. The second segment of trail is often referred to as "the saddle" and is comprised of a smooth ridge that connects the summits of Half Dome and Sub Dome. This trail section is roughly 400 feet in length and it follows the saddle's ridgeline. The saddle segment of the trail is entirely on exposed bedrock and is the only segment of the trail that is relatively level. The final segment of the trail is the cables themselves. The cables segment is roughly 800 feet long and travels over very steep ground, with slopes sometimes exceeding 50 degrees. The cables and stanchions were replaced in 1934 and 1984 and are considered non-contributing but compatible.

Sub Dome Granite Stone Masonry Steps and Retaining Walls (Structure)

LCS ID: TBD, built in 1919 – contributing

The Sub Dome granite stone masonry steps and retaining walls were constructed in 1919 as part of the cables installation financed by the Sierra Club. The granite stone masonry steps and retaining walls were necessary to create the trail bench along the switchback portion of the trail on Sub Dome. This granite stone masonry steps and retaining walls portion of the trail covers roughly 1500 linear feet of the trail. This feature consists of discontinuous steps and retaining walls made from locally procured granite. All of the stone work for the steps and retaining walls is dry laid.

This feature includes nearly 500 steps and some of them are chiseled into the bedrock granite. The steps have highly irregular risers and treads. The steps have an abundance of drill scar evidence. The retaining walls are composed of irregular stacked granite blocks with minimal tooling. The stones that are used in the retaining walls tend to be long and rectangular, with the long side laid horizontally. Occasionally, hexagonal rods have been drilled into the bedrock to help secure the bases of the retaining walls. The retaining walls are usually only two to three courses high, but sometimes are as tall as 4 to 5 feet with 7 or more courses. There are roughly 25 discrete retaining walls that have a combined length of over 400 feet.

Anderson Memorial Arch Ruins (Site)

LCS ID: TBD, built in 1919 – contributing

The Anderson memorial arch was constructed in 1919 under the auspices of the Sierra Club to honor George Anderson. The memorial arch consisted of a dry-laid set of stone steps leading up to a small earthen platform where the arch and plaque were located. The arch consisted of two tooled and mortared stone masonry pylons that were roughly 2.5 feet tall, with four peeled log posts rising from each pylon, which support a set of ornamental peeled log trusses that created a roof. The passage through the arch was roughly five feet wide and was designed to be walked through en route to Half

⁵ Jim Snyder, Former Yosemite Historian and Trail Crew Foreman, Email Correspondence with Historical Landscape Architect Daniel Schaible, November 3, 2010.

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Dome's summit. Attached to the arch was a plaque that recognized "Captain George Anderson" as the first to reach Half Dome's summit and a sign directing hikers to the nearest available water source.

All that remains of the arch are three stone steps that lead to an earthen platform where some of the original hewn stone pylon blocks can be found. None of the original signage or peeled logs are present. Despite its ruinous condition, the Anderson memorial arch is considered contributing because it was designed as an integral part of the improvements made to the trail in 1919 and it functioned as a rustic gateway to Half Dome for many years. In recent years, the park has explored options related to stabilizing or reconstructing the memorial arch, although no such preservation work has been undertaken at this point.

Non-Contributing Resource

Half Dome Cables and Stanchions (Structure)

Installed in 1984 – non-contributing and compatible

The cables are comprised of a pair of 5/8 inch thick steel cables supported by galvanized steel pipe stanchions, which are placed every ten feet on average. There are a total of 68 pairs of stanchions along the cables, with the distance between stanchions ranging from 8-13 feet. The pairs of stanchions are typically spanned with 2x4s at their base, which provide hikers with an opportunity to catch their breath on the way up. The trail between the cables is 30 inches wide and is on smooth granitic bedrock, with the exception of the 2x4 footholds between the stanchions. The cables and stanchions were installed in 1919, but were completely replaced in 1934 and 1984 and are therefore non-contributing. However, the cables and stanchions maintain their original design, location, and material composition (steel cable and steel pipe) and are therefore compatible within the historic district.

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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.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1875 – 1919

Significant Dates

1875

1919

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

George G. Anderson

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George G. Anderson

C. T. Gutleben

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Half Dome cables and trail encompasses all significant developments, beginning with George Anderson's ascent of Half Dome in 1875 and concluding after the cables route and switchbacks were installed by the Sierra Club in 1919.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary (Provide a summary that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Half Dome cables and trail are one of the signature attractions in Yosemite National Park and this route is considered by many to be the birthplace of technical rock climbing in America.⁶ As proposed in this National Register of Historic Places Nomination, the site has local significance under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and Transportation. It is considered significant in Entertainment/Recreation and Transportation as one of the earliest trails to a Yosemite Valley high mountain summit and as one of the most difficult trail building projects in the park. Anderson's initial bolt and rope system opened an inaccessible mountain peak to the intrepid few who dared to follow. Subsequent improvements in the form of stone steps and the addition of steel cables made the trail immensely more accessible and popular. The site has local significance under National Register Criterion B for its association with George Anderson. George Anderson was a Yosemite area carpenter, blacksmith, sailor, and trail worker who gained wide acclaim for his skill as a mountaineer and for being the first person ever to reach the summit of Half Dome. Furthermore, the site has local significance under National Register Criterion C for its technological advances in the design and construction of rock climbing routes, particularly the property's ground-breaking use of specialized rock climbing tools and techniques to aid in the ascent of Half Dome.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Soon after its discovery, Yosemite became a source of interest for travelers and adventure seekers from all over the world. One of the earliest to arrive in the valley was James M. Hutchings in 1855.⁷ Hutchings, having set up a hotel in Yosemite Valley, spent much of the time attempting to climb every peak encircling Yosemite Valley. John Muir came to the Sierra in 1868 and became an unparalleled voice for conservation, the beauty of the Sierra Nevada, and mountaineering. His climbs in Yosemite Valley and the High Sierra, in many cases the earliest known, place him among the pioneers of California mountaineering.⁸

From 1863-1867 Josiah Whitney, assisted by Clarence King, made the first serious topographical and geological reconnaissance of the Yosemite area, including Yosemite Valley. This undertaking involved climbing practically every summit during a circuit of Yosemite Valley's rim. This circuit included the easier peaks, such as El Capitan, Eagle Peak, Yosemite Point, North Dome, Basket Dome, Mount Watkins, Sentinel Dome, and the Cathedral Rocks. The remaining summits seemed completely beyond the range of human ability. In 1869 the California Geological Survey, headed by Josiah Whitney, wrote concerning Mount Starr King and Mount Broderick, "Their summits are absolutely inaccessible"; and of Half Dome, "It is a crest of granite rising to the height of 4737 feet above the Valley, perfectly inaccessible, being probably the only one of all the prominent points about the Yosemite, which never has been, and never will be trodden by human foot."⁹

Spurred by this challenge, James M. Hutchings and two others made the first recorded attempt on Half Dome in 1869, but were stopped when they encountered polished granite "as smooth as glass" and deemed the climb impossible.¹⁰ The famed climber George B. Bayley, who was the first to reach the summit of Mt. Starr King in 1876, also attempted to climb Half Dome in the early 1870s, but encountered the same problem described by Hutchings.¹¹ In 1873, Yosemite area master trail-builder John Conway and his sons aimed to reach the top by climbing barefoot with a rope that they would fasten onto spikes driven into natural fissures in the rock (as described by John Muir in his correspondence with the *San Francisco Bulletin*): "John Conway, a resident of the valley, has a flock of small boys who climb smooth rocks like lizards, and some two years ago he sent them up the dome with a rope, hoping they might be able to fasten it with spikes driven into fissures, and thus reach the top. They took the rope in tow and succeeded in making it two or three hundred feet above the point ordinarily reached, but finding the upper portion of the curve impracticable without laboriously drilling into the rock, he called down his lizards, thinking himself fortunate in effecting a safe retreat."¹²

⁶ Gary Arce, *Defying Gravity: High Adventures on Yosemite's Walls*, 13. Also, Ken Yager, President of the Yosemite Climbing Association, telephone interview with Historical Landscape Architect Daniel Schaible, July 7, 2010.

⁷ Greene, 32.

⁸ Pat Ament, *A History of Free Climbing in America: Wizards of the Rock*, 9-10.

⁹ Josiah Whitney, *The Yosemite Guide-Book*, 67.

¹⁰ James Mason Hutchings, *In the Heart of the Sierras; Tourist's Guide to the Yosemite Valley and the Big Tree Groves*, 457-8.

¹¹ United States National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, 3.

¹² *San Francisco Bulletin*, "South Dome," November 10, 1875.

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On the heels of these unsuccessful attempts, the Scottish immigrant George G. Anderson finally engineered his way to the top of the 8,842-foot monolith on October 12, 1875, becoming the first documented person to do so. A former seaman, prominent in the early trail building days in Yosemite Valley, Anderson succeeded in his efforts by devising a novel approach to rock climbing. Anderson accomplished his climb of Half Dome with hand drills and a hammer. By drilling holes and then driving wooden pins and wrought iron eyebolts into the granite, he successfully fastened a rope to each bolt and pulled himself up, resting his foot on the last spike while he drilled a hole for the next. Frequently, Anderson would encounter slight footholds that would allow him to free climb 15-20 feet without relying on bolts.¹³ Anderson followed this painstaking process for 450 feet before reaching the top of Half Dome, using roughly 40 bolts to reach the summit.¹⁴

Anderson later came back and installed a permanent rope that was lashed to the eyebolts and was "fashioned by stringing a number of bale ropes until the cable was about three inches in diameter. To keep it from tangling, [Anderson] bound it at every foot. When each pin was well secured in the granite, [Anderson] attached the cable to a pin ring by a smaller rope."¹⁵ It is unknown exactly how long it took Anderson to initially reach the top of Half Dome; some sources estimate that it took roughly one week while other sources believe it was longer.¹⁶ Anderson's feat was widely chronicled in the press with articles appearing in 1875 and 1876 in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Bulletin*, *Stockton Herald*, *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, *Chicago Sunday Times*, *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, *Daly State Gazette* (Trenton), *The Farmers Cabinet* (Amherst), *Christian Advocate* (New York City), *Cincinnati Commercial*, and the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, among others.¹⁷

Anderson's ascent was notable for two reasons. First, there is no record of anyone climbing Half Dome unaided by Anderson's fixed bolts and rope system until 1919. Second, this climb marked the debut of extensive bolt placement in American rock climbing and this route is considered by many to be the birthplace of technical rock climbing in America.¹⁸ Anderson hoped to one day build a more accessible means of reaching Half Dome's summit, but these plans were not realized due to his early death from pneumonia in 1884. Although widely praised by his contemporaries, Anderson's groundbreaking climb foreshadowed a rock-climbing controversy that would not reach a head for nearly 100 years when technological advances would make free climbing possible, raising fundamental questions among rock climbers, such as: At what point does a reliance on artificial bolts negate the inherent challenge of big wall rock climbing? Does excessive bolting disfigure a route's natural beauty and display a lack of respect for the natural world?¹⁹

Heavy snows in 1883-84 destroyed a number of the eyebolts and sections of the rope, which were replaced by A. Phimister Proctor in 1884. During the next 34 years, there were occasional mountaineers who made the daring climb to the summit of Half Dome, until 1919, when a pair of steel cables were installed on Half Dome's eastern slope. This installation, financed by M. Hall McAllister (under the auspices of the Sierra Club) and designed by engineer C.T. Gutleben, included stone steps on the Sub Dome approach leading to the polished granite slope of Half Dome.²⁰ A double handrail of steel cables supported by steel stanchions crossed with wooden footholds culminated the final section of the hike up to Half Dome's summit. These steel cables followed the approximate alignment of Anderson's original route and made the trip up Half Dome dramatically more popular and safe. Stone steps and steel cables are still used along the popular trail corridor today, following Anderson's 1875 route and using the same basic design as the original 1919 cables installation.

In 1920, shortly after the cables route was installed, it was described by M. Hall McAllister:

It consists of two sections. The first is over a small dome, or saddle, and consists of a zigzag trail and stone steps covering about six hundred feet. The second section leads up the big incline on the large

¹³ Ibid.
¹⁴ Hutchings.
¹⁵ Alexander Phimister Proctor, *An Ascent of Half Dome in 1884*, 3.
¹⁶ In *Camp 4, Recollections of a Yosemite Rockclimber*, Roper states that it took one week to make the climb. Former Yosemite historian and trail crew foreman Jim Snyder believes the time-consuming and physically exhausting process of drilling by hand, forging the eyebolts, and sharpening the tools probably took closer to a month.
¹⁷ *Chronicles of Early Ascents of Half Dome*, <http://www.stanford.edu/~galic/history/halfdome/index.html>
¹⁸ Arce, Yager.
¹⁹ For more elaboration on the philosophical rift between proponents of aid-climbing and proponents of free-climbing, refer to the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form *Camp 4*, 6-14. Also, see Arce, *Defying Gravity* and Roper, *Camp 4*.
²⁰ Sub Dome does not have an official name, and has historically been referred to as both Quarter Dome and Sub Dome. For the purposes of this National Register nomination, it is referred to as Sub Dome.

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dome. That slope was of polished granite, about eight hundred feet in length. On that incline, which varies from forty-five to sixty degrees, is placed a double hand-rail of steel cables set into a double line of steel posts thirty inches apart, like those of a steamer's gangplank. These steel posts are set into sockets drilled in the granite every ten feet and at intervals of one hundred feet heavy chains bolted in the rock will help to strengthen the cables or take up any strain on them. When the season is over, the caps on the top of each post will be unscrewed, the cables, which are anchored permanently at the top and bottom of the rock, will be lifted out of the posts, and the posts taken from their sockets and stowed away off the rock until spring. It is not thought that the cables lying flat on the rock, and being also held by the safety chains, will be at all disturbed by the spring ice-avalanches.

The trip can be made as follows: About three hours from the foot of the Vernal Fall Trail on mule-back to the foot of the zigzag trail or 'Rock Stairway'; this ride is up the regular Yosemite trail to Cloud's Rest, and you rise about thirty-four hundred feet above the valley. Leaving the mules at this point, a walk of about three hundred yards and a rise of six hundred or seven hundred feet take you to the foot of the cable stairway, where a climb of another eight hundred feet, holding to the wire cables, will land you on the summit of Half Dome.

It is best to wear rubber-soled tennis shoes, as the granite is so smooth and slippery that spiked soles are dangerous. For those who feel timid safety belts are provided, which fasten you to the cables so that it will be impossible to slip and meet with an accident.

The work was done under the direction of experts from the Sierra Club, and part of the expense shared by the park authorities. The stairway has now been completed and turned over to the Yosemite National Park for the use of the public. The memorial plaque at the foot of the stairway reads:

ERECTED
1919
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
SIERRA CLUB
TO REMEMBER
CAPTAIN GEORGE ANDERSON
WHO FIRST ASCENDED THE DOME IN
1875²¹

Along with the notoriety he received for his pioneering ascent of Half Dome, George Anderson is remembered for other reasons as well. He is credited with creating America's first known pair of specialized rock-climbing shoes, by using turpentine on the soles on a custom designed pair of moccasins.²² By all accounts, Anderson had a charismatic personality who had "irrepressible determination"²³ and was a "brawny, powerful man with tattooed arms, a splendid specimen of manhood."²⁴ In some cases, Anderson's feats are likely blurred with folktales and legend. For instance, Anderson, who was widely regarded for his strength, is said to have single-handedly carried a 535-pound section of an iron bridge.²⁵ Furthering his legend, Anderson earned the nickname "Captain George Anderson" following his Half Dome ascent and this was the moniker used to honor him at his memorial arch built by the Sierra Club in 1919. George Anderson's legacy at Yosemite is remembered by his gravestone in Yosemite Valley Pioneer Cemetery and by his cabin, which was moved from Foresta to the Pioneer Yosemite History Center at Wawona in 1961, where it is used to help interpret the significance of recreational mountaineering in Yosemite's History.

Within one week of Anderson's ascent, two groups of tourists led by George Anderson had pulled themselves up to the top of Anderson's rope. Tourists who made the climb likened the ascent to climbing a steep flight of stairs and some found it less harrowing than they expected. One climber wrote, "...nobody but a drunken man or an idiot can fall off any portion of the Dome without deliberately jumping off."²⁶ On November 10, 1875, John Muir became one of the first people to climb

²¹ *Sierra Club Bulletin: Notes and Correspondence*, Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1920, 101-102.

²² Ament, 10; Arce, 13.

²³ Hutchings.

²⁴ *The Fresno Bee*, "The Man Who Conquered Half Dome," October 19, 1975: B1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *The Sacramento Bee*, "Climbing the South Dome, no. III." July 8. 1880.

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Half Dome, but was somewhat unimpressed with the view afforded from its summit, because Half Dome, which Muir described as "the most sublime feature of all Yosemite's views," was out of sight beneath his feet.²⁷ Although never realized during his lifetime, George Anderson intended to construct a more accessible means for reaching Half Dome's summit than his original system of eyebolts and rope. Originally envisioned by Anderson as a staircase, he later dreamed of building an "elevator" and "a model of a steam car that shall carry passengers up the almost perpendicular wall."²⁸ In 1876, John Muir reported in the *San Francisco Bulletin* that Anderson had initiated construction of his staircase.²⁹ However, Anderson never completed the staircase (or elevator) like he had hoped.

The knotted rope that Anderson fastened to the bolts enabled Half Dome to be scaled for several years thereafter by the few who dared to meet the challenge. During the winter of 1883-84, sliding ice and snow broke the rope Anderson had installed and ripped out some of the eyebolts. It was again impossible for others to reach the top until several mountaineers, led by notable American sculptor A. Phimister Proctor and his accomplice Alden Sampson, duplicated the original climb and replaced the rope in 1884.³⁰ The ropeway had to be replaced again in 1895 and possibly on other occasions as well.³¹

In the 1919 season, through donations from M. Hall McAllister and the Sierra Club, a stairway was built to the top of Half Dome.³² It consisted of a zigzag trail and stone steps in the lower 2600 feet leading to the dome. Plans for the project were drawn by C. T. Gutleben, an engineer who worked on many projects in Yosemite Valley from 1916-1926.³³ The cable was packed to the dome full length on several mules. Workers erected a double handrail of steel cables set in two lines thirty inches apart, set in sockets drilled in the granite approximately every ten feet. In 1919, the cables route was described as consisting of: "A double row of iron posts about waist high were set in holes drilled in the rock. Through "eyes" in the top of these posts, formed by turning the metal back in the form of a loop, a steel cable was stretched and securely anchored at the ends."³⁴ Attracting "a large number of mountain-lovers"³⁵ during its inaugural year, the Half Dome Cables have proven to be an enduring attraction for Yosemite visitors for over 90 years. In 2008, over 70,000 individuals experienced the challenge of climbing the Half Dome Cables, the majority of them completing it as a 15-mile, 4,700-foot elevation gain day-hike beginning at the Mist Trail in Yosemite Valley.³⁶

In summary, the Half Dome Cables and Trail is locally significant in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and Transportation under Criterion A as one of the earliest trails to a Yosemite Valley high mountain summit and as one of the most challenging and popular hikes at Yosemite that has proven to be an enduring attraction for adventure seekers. It is locally significant under Criterion B for its association with George Anderson, a pioneer in the sport of mountaineering and rock climbing whose accomplishments are still widely remembered and interpreted at Yosemite. Finally, it is locally significant under Criterion C for its innovative design and construction in that it utilized specialized tools and techniques to aid in the ascent of Half Dome that had not been previously used in U.S. rock climbing.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Resources Associated with Tourism, Recreation and the Preservation Ethic in Yosemite (1864-1971)³⁷

Tourism: In 1864, one hundred tourists visited Yosemite. At the time they only had three hotels to choose from; Black's Hotel, La Casa Nevada, and Hutchings House. However, traveling to Yosemite at this time was dreadful. Tourism in Yosemite grew vigorously with the arrival of the automobile. By the late 1910s and early 1920s Yosemite booster literature had circulated around the United States. Yosemite Park officials found themselves struggling to keep up with the influx of tourism. Although many of the tourists came to Yosemite to take advantage of the many outdoor activities available in the

²⁷ John Muir and Galen Rowell, *The Yosemite*, "South Dome."

²⁸ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 31, 1876.

²⁹ *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Summering in the Sierra," September 6, 1876, 1.

³⁰ Proctor.

³¹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, "They Climbed to Half Dome's Top," August 4, 1895, 9.

³² United States National Park Service, *Yosemite National Park*, 5.

³³ Online Archives of California, "Gutleben Collection, 1916-1959."

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/search?group=Items;group=Collections;idT=08c0a72f0a58e99b2d0c38e6e4b79dfd>

³⁴ United States National Park Service, *Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of the Interior For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1919*, 67.

³⁵ *Sierra Club Bulletin: Notes and Correspondence*, Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1920, 103.

³⁶ Steve Lawson, Janet Choi, Nathan Reigner, Peter Newman, and Adam Gibson. *Half Dome Cables Modeling and Visitor Use Estimation*, 13.

³⁷ DRAFT Yosemite Multiple Property Document Form "Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park," Section F, 2004.

Half Dome Cables and Trail

Mariposa, CA

Name of Property

County and State

park they came to expect developed facilities. Park facilities needed to be increasingly improved and expanded. Because of the explosive growth in tourism, park officials scrambled to generate enough funds for the improvement of roads, trails, and campgrounds, construction of bridges, expansion of park facilities, and landscaping.

Most early-day visitation to Yosemite centered on Yosemite Valley, which became the focal point of camping, hiking, skiing, and sightseeing activities. These property types are related to the development and practice of leisure activities for diversion, amusement, and sport by park visitors and may be either National Park Service designed or concessionaire facilities. Many early visitors to Yosemite limited their stay to the Yosemite Valley, very few ventured into the backcountry. This was primarily because many of those who could afford an extended trip to the park during these years preferred to experience nature in some degree of comfort, and stayed close to the Valley's amenities. Early tourists arrived by stagecoach, often after a rail journey to the transfer point at El Portal. The cost of such trips limited most visitation to the well-to-do, who typically favored short day hikes or the serene contemplation of scenery from well-appointed lodgings. When Yosemite was opened to automobiles in 1913, a new class of visitor soon arrived. Working class families that never had the time or disposable income for an extended vacation in the grand manner were now able to make the trip to the park, with their cars often serving as both transportation and lodging.

Trails: The first white men to descend to the floor of Yosemite Valley, in 1851, were members of the Mariposa Battalion, a military volunteer unit that had been authorized to move the Indians of Yosemite Valley onto reservations. It is possible that members of the earlier 1833 Joseph Walker reconnaissance trip into Utah, Nevada, and California gazed down into Yosemite Valley as they made their way westward over the Sierra. The U.S. Army, who administered the park from 1890 until 1916, found only a few Indian trails in the backcountry beyond the rim of the Valley. To aid their work, they improved upon these and established new trails as the need arose. Most of the current backcountry trail system was laid down by the army during this period. To aid patrols after the first snowfalls, the army also marked trails with distinctive blazes cut into the bark of trees. The development of trail building methods in Yosemite is closely related to other factors in park history such as early exploration, landscape architecture, and recreation. Yosemite trails were most often designed with beds of dry-laid stone. This removed much of the need for cutting into the natural slope, reduced the risk of erosion, and preserved the existing vegetation on either side of the trail. The designs of these trails were based on the design of park roads using natural stone for retaining and guard walls, and crushed stone as a source of gravel for trail surfacing. By the 1920s trail design had an increasing emphasis on wide sturdy trails that would accommodate horses as well as foot traffic. In 1934 the Engineering Division published the first standards for trail construction, calling for a set width of four feet throughout, and grades of no more than 15 percent except when absolutely necessary. The grade was to be varied at regular intervals, to avoid overworking one set of the visitor's leg muscles, while drainage dips or water breaks were preferred over culverts and bridges. They were also designed to be invisible from anyone not using them in order to preserve the scenic landscape.

Rock Climbing: The rich and well documented history of rock climbing presents one of the most exciting areas for creative future National Register work in Yosemite National Park. The granite walls of Yosemite had attracted western climbers for years, including John Muir in 1869. The first bolts used for rock-climbing were drilled into Half Dome in 1875. Attaching ropes to these bolts allowed people to ascend these great cliffs that were previously deemed insurmountable. Yosemite National Park was the birthplace of modern rock-climbing and climbing in the park established international standards still in place today. Modern rock-climbing equipment, including that produced by successful companies like *Patagonia*, evolved from the first pitons or bolts hammered into the great granite cliffs of Yosemite. Camp 4 in particular served as a laboratory for the development of highly sophisticated equipment designs that enable climbers to ascend the vertical rock of the Valley and in the process create an influential business model that greatly contributed to the mass appeal of outdoor recreation and the growth of "green" consumerism in the late twentieth-century. Many of the most historically significant rock climbs in the world are found in Yosemite Valley. These routes are very well mapped with excellent historical records pertaining to their development and history. There are routes on El Capitan, Half Dome, the Lost Arrow, and surrounding cliffs that qualify for listing on the National Register. In many cases there are extant historic resources in the form of pitons and bolts that need to be recorded and preserved in place where possible.

Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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- Ament, Pat. *A History of Free Climbing in North America: Wizards of Rock*. Berkeley, CA: Wilderness Press, 2002.
- Arce, Gary. *Defying Gravity: High Adventure on Yosemite's Walls*. Berkeley, CA: Wilderness Press, 1996.
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- Proctor, Alexander Phimister. *An Ascent of Half Dome in 1884*. San Francisco, CA: Grabhorn Press, 1945.
- Roper, Steve. *Camp 4, Recollections of a Yosemite Rockclimber*. Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers, 1994.
- Whitney, Josiah. *The Yosemite Guide-Book*. California Legislature, 1869.
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- Greene, Linda. *Historic Resources Study, Yosemite: The Park and its Resources*. National Park Service. September, 1987. Copy available in Yosemite Research Library.
- Kirk, Andrew, Charles Palmer et. al. *Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park*. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Document, Draft, 2004. Copy available in Yosemite Research Library.
- Lawson, Steve, Janet Choi, Nathan Reigner, Peter Newman, and Adam Gibson. *Half Dome Cables Modeling and Visitor Use Estimation: Final Report*. April, 2009. Copy available in Yosemite Research Library.
- United States National Park Service. Denver Service Center. *Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Half Dome Trail*. Prepared by Linda W. Greene and James B. Snyder, 1988.
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- _____. *Report of the Director of the National Park Service to the Secretary of the Interior For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1919*. Washington, 1919. Copy available in Yosemite Research Library.
- _____. Yosemite National Park. *George Anderson's 1875 Ascent of Half Dome and the Building of the Half Dome Trail: Historical Overview and Project Recommendations*. Copy available in Yosemite Research Library.

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- Chronicles of Early Ascents of Half Dome. <http://www.stanford.edu/~galic/history/halfdome/index.html>
(Accessed October 25, 2010).
- The Stereoviews of Carleton Watkins. <http://www.carletonwatkins.org/> (Accessed December 17, 2010).
- Online Archives of California. "The Gutleben Collection, 1916-1959."
<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/search?group=Items;group=Collections;idT=08c0a72f0a58e99b2d0c38e6e4b79dfd>
(Accessed November 3, 2010).

Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

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United States National Park Service. Yosemite National Park. List of Classified Structures.
<http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/reports/details.asp?CLASS=&REPORTID=176894&RECORDNO=159>
(Accessed October 8, 2010).

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

The Fresno Bee. "The Man Who Conquered Half Dome." October 19, 1975.

The Philadelphia Inquirer. August 31, 1876.

The Sacramento Bee. "Climbing the South Dome, no. III." July 8, 1880.

San Francisco Bulletin. "South Dome." November 10, 1875.

_____. "Summering in the Sierra." September 6, 1876.

San Francisco Chronicle. "They Climbed to Half Dome's Top." August 4, 1895.

Sierra Club Bulletin: Notes and Correspondence. Vol. 11, No. 1. January 1920.

_____. Vol. 11, No. 2. January 1921.

Yosemite Nature Notes. "George Anderson, First Up the Dome." Vol. 46, No. 2. 1977.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Lopez, Jose. Yosemite Trail Crew Foreman. Telephone conversation with Historical Landscape Architect Daniel Schaible. November 16, 2010.

Snyder, Jim. Retired Yosemite Historian and Trail Crew Foreman. Email correspondence with Historical Landscape Architect Daniel Schaible. November 3, 2010.

Yager, Ken. President of the Yosemite Climbing Association. Telephone conversation with Historical Landscape Architect Daniel Schaible. July 7, 2010.

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
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: Yosemite Research Library and Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.3
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	11 N	276800	4180659	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	11N	277353	4180953	4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary encompasses the Half Dome Trail from the beginning of the Sub Dome switchbacks to the end of the Half Dome Cables. The boundary is 50 feet on either side of the center of the trail to encompass the trail and all of its associated features. The site boundary is indicated on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the Half Dome cables and trail historic site encompasses the alignment of both George Anderson's original route up Half Dome (1875) and the Sub Dome switchback and cables route installed by the Sierra Club (1919). The boundary begins at the foot of the Sub Dome switchbacks (including the ruins of the Anderson memorial arch and plaque) and follows the alignment of the trail all the way to its terminus at Half Dome's summit.

Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel Schaible, Historical Landscape Architect, Branch of History, Architecture and Landscapes
organization National Park Service, Yosemite National Park date 08-24-2011
street & number 5083 Foresta Road, Bldg. 759 telephone 209-379-1295
city or town El Portal state CA zip code 95318
e-mail daniel_schaible@nps.gov

Property Owner:

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

name Don L. Neubacher, Superintendent, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park
street & number PO Box 577 telephone
city or town Yosemite state CA 95389

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Additional Documentation

- I. Half Dome cables and trail Site Plan, showing the boundary designation for the Half Dome cables and trail and UTM location.
- II. Historic photographs associated with the Half Dome cables and trail, Mariposa County, California.
- III. Photo Log – Current photographs of the Half Dome cables and trail, Mariposa County, California.

Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
County and State

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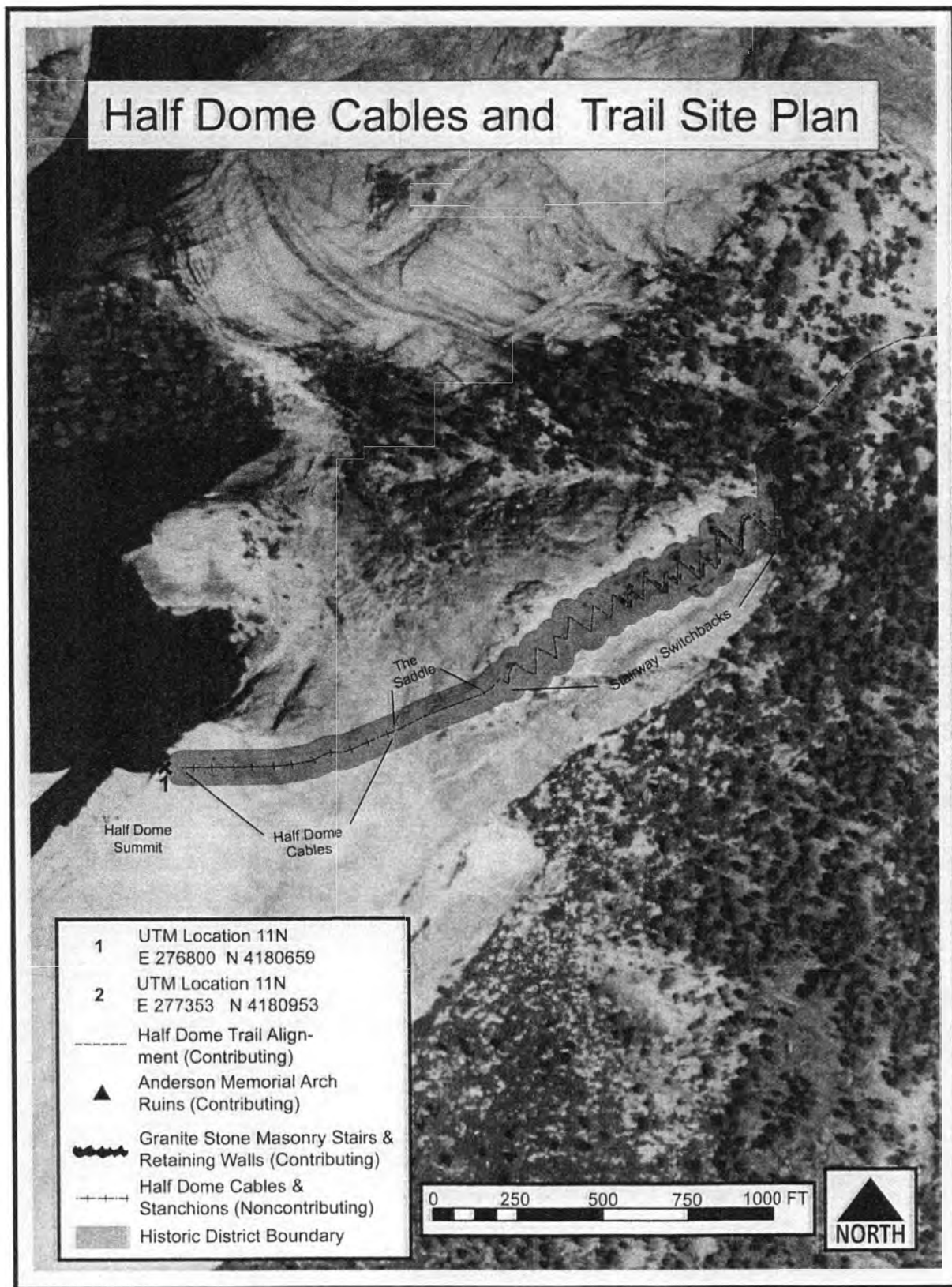
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- II. Historic photographs associated with the Half Dome cables and trail, Mariposa County, California.
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Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
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I. Half Dome Cables and Trail Site Plan

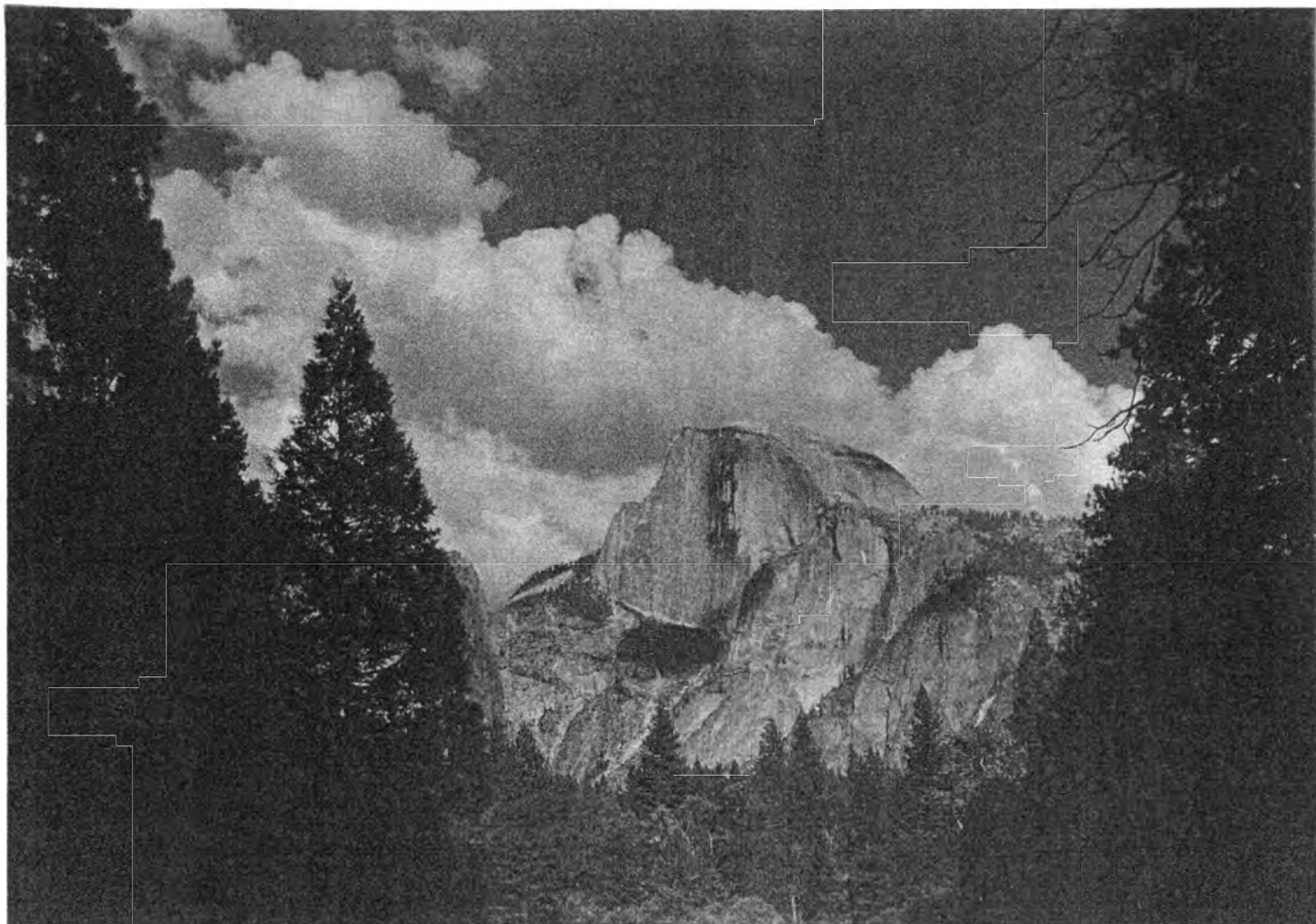


Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

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II. Historic Photographs

Photograph: Half Dome, viewed from Sentinel Bridge.
Photographer: Ralph H. Anderson
Date: 08/23/1939
Photograph Location: Yosemite Research Library (Neg. No. RL-17,672)



Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

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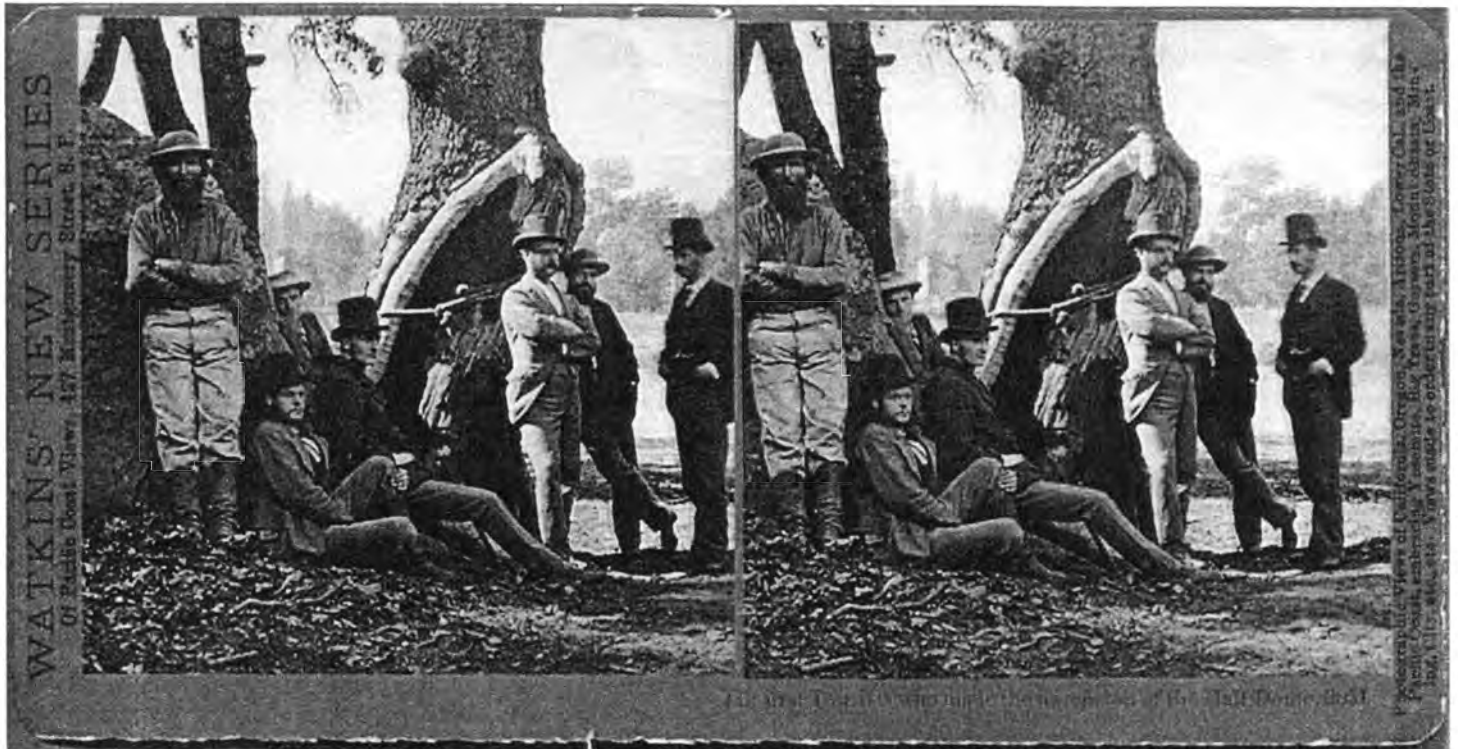
II. Historic Photographs (Continued)

Photograph: Stereoview image taken of the first tourist party that reached the summit of Half Dome, following their trip. George Anderson is believed to be the bearded man standing in the far left of the image.

Photographer: Carleton Watkins

Date: October 16, 1875

Photograph Location: http://www.carletonwatkins.org/Gallery/gimg/gimg_w3051.htm

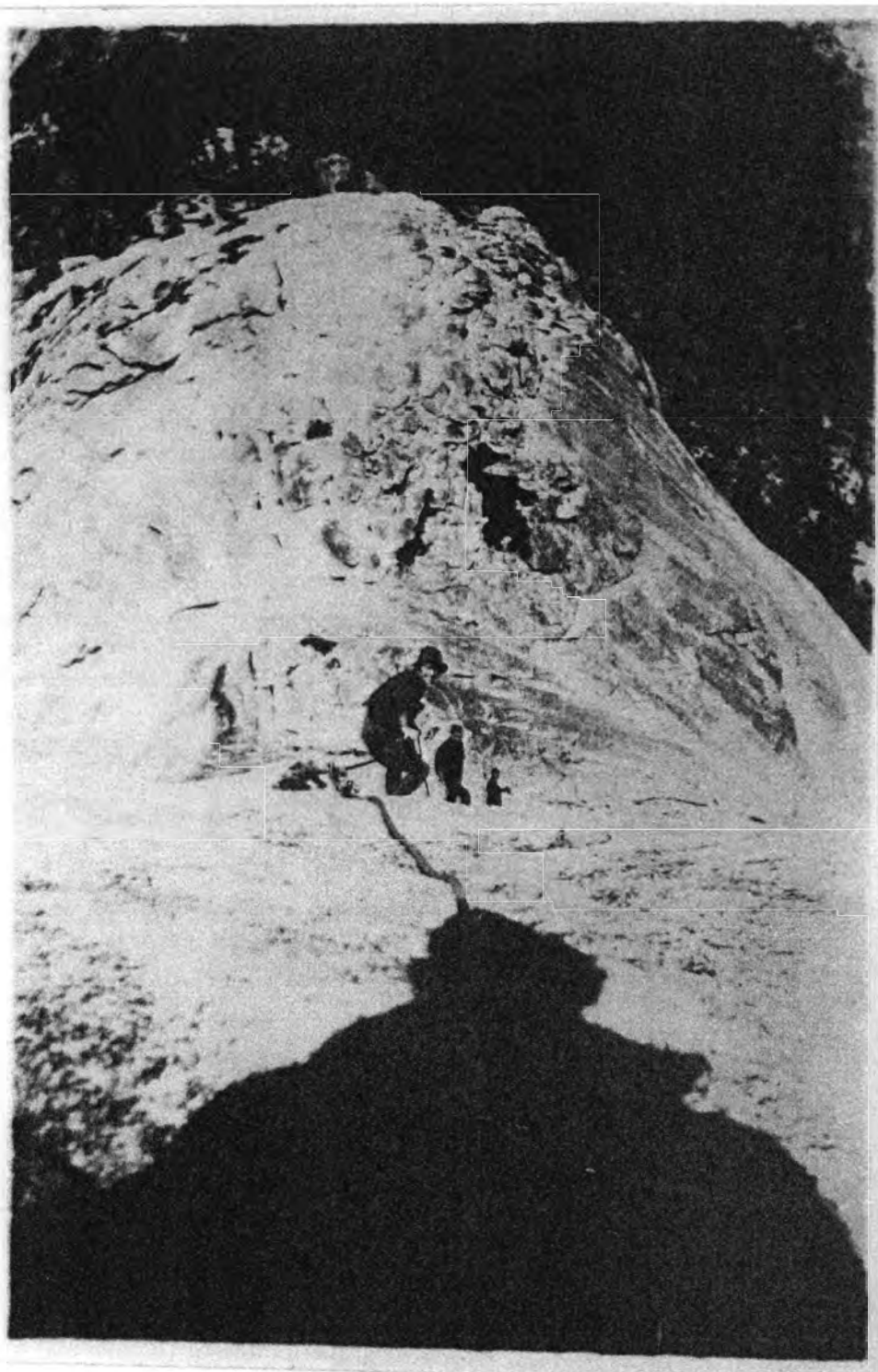


Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
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II. Historic Photographs (Continued)

Photograph: One of two known pictures of the rope and eyebolt system (pre-cables). The other known picture of the rope and eyebolt system can be found in Yosemite and Its High Sierra by John H. Williams, 1914, p.86.
Photographer: Unknown
Date: ca. 1915-1919
Photograph Location: Yosemite Research Library (Neg. No. RL-17,334)



Half Dome Cables and Trail
Name of Property

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II. Historic Photographs (Continued)

Photograph: One of Anderson's original wrought iron eyebolts (1875), which is now a part of the Yosemite Climbing Association's collection.
Photographer: Ken Yager
Date: 2008
Photograph Location: Yosemite Climbing Association (yosemiteclimbing.org)

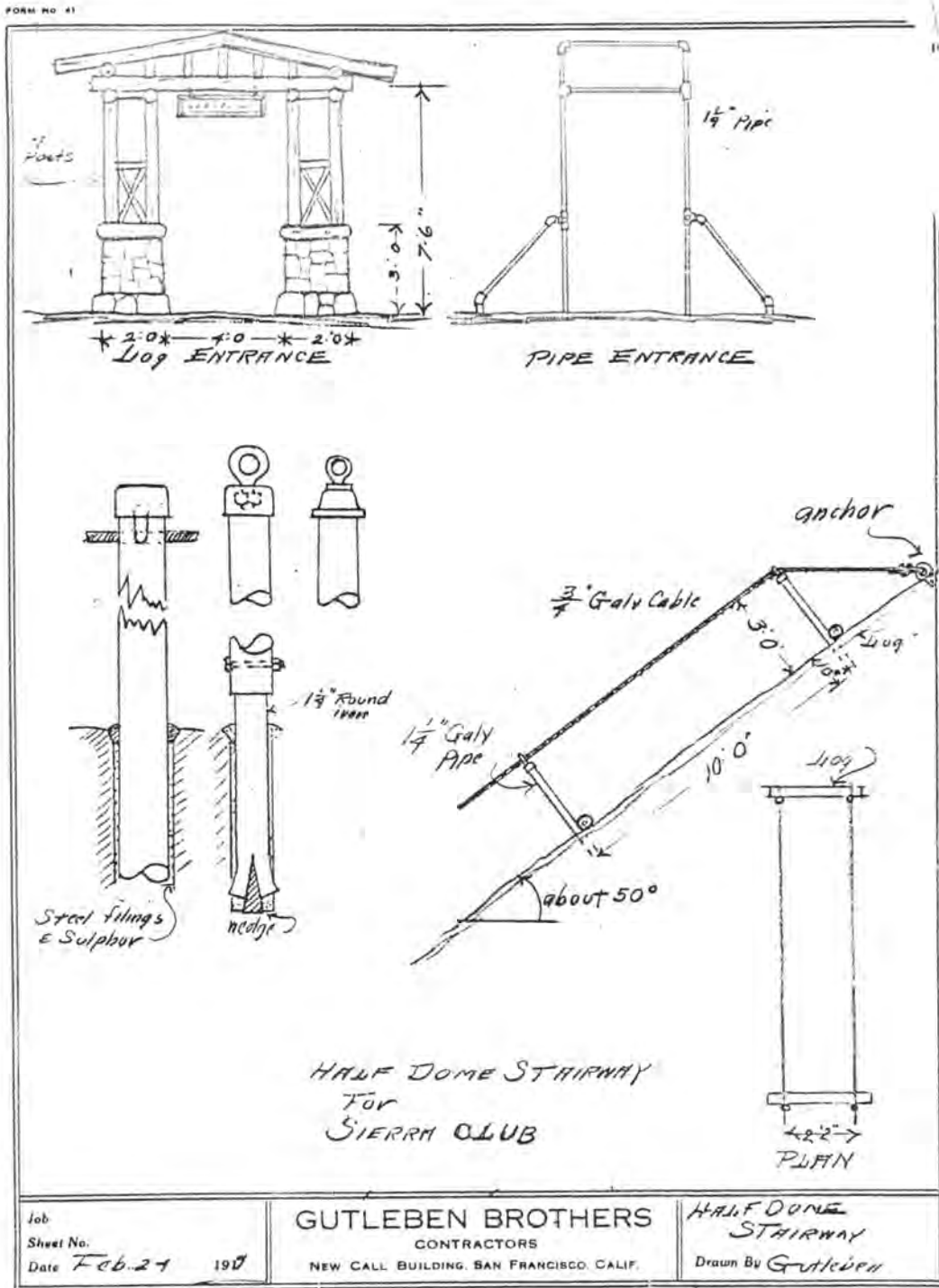


Half Dome Cables and Trail
 Name of Property

Mariposa, CA
 County and State

II. Historic Photographs (Continued)

Photograph: Design drawings for the Half Dome Stairway, as designed by the Gutleben Brothers.
 Designer: C. T. Gutleben
 Date: 1919
 Document Location: Yosemite Research Library, Gutleben File



Job Sheet No. Date Feb. 24 1919	GUTLEBEN BROTHERS CONTRACTORS NEW CALL BUILDING, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.	HALF DOME STAIRWAY Drawn By Gutleben
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Half Dome Cables and Trail

Name of Property

Mariposa, CA

County and State

II. Historic Photographs (Continued)

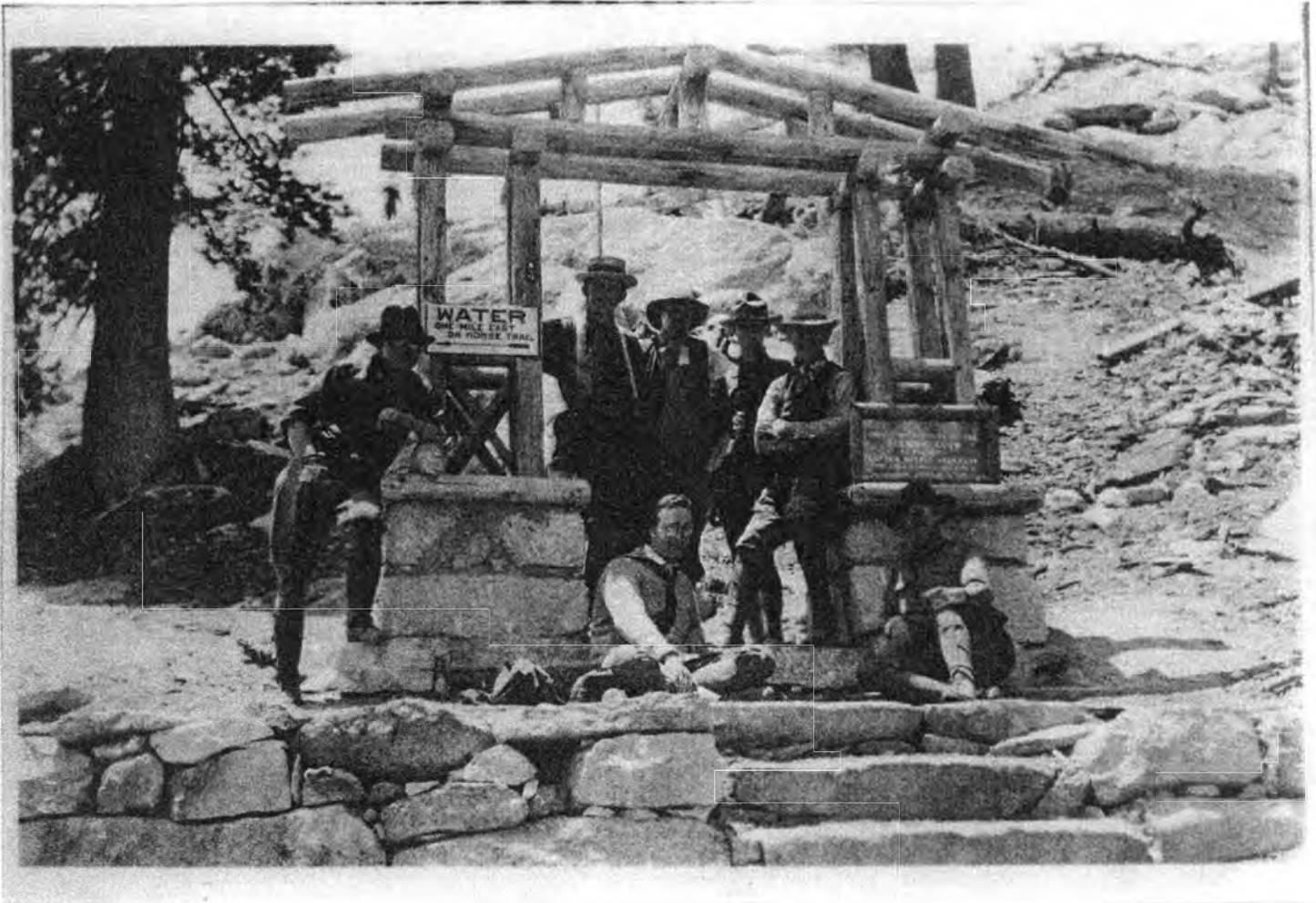
Photograph: Anderson memorial arch and plaque, taken shortly after its construction in 1919. This photograph includes the following caption written by Francois Matthes:

Our party at the foot of the Dome (Half Dome) left to right (standing) "Al" the mechanic, who did most of the work on fixing the cables; Mr. Ansel Adams, Custodian of the LeConte Memorial Lodge, "Slim"? the new guide (whom we guided up Half Dome), Francis Cameron, my assistant, McAllister (who gave the funds for the cables and the little memorial gate to Anderson the pioneer climber of Half Dome [sic] --- sitting: Mr. Trask, a friend of McAllister - myself (Matthes). Sign reads: "Water - one mile east on horse trail"

Photographer: Francois Matthes

Date: 1919

Photograph Location: Yosemite Research Library (Neg. no: YM-12, 034)



Half Dome Cables and Trail

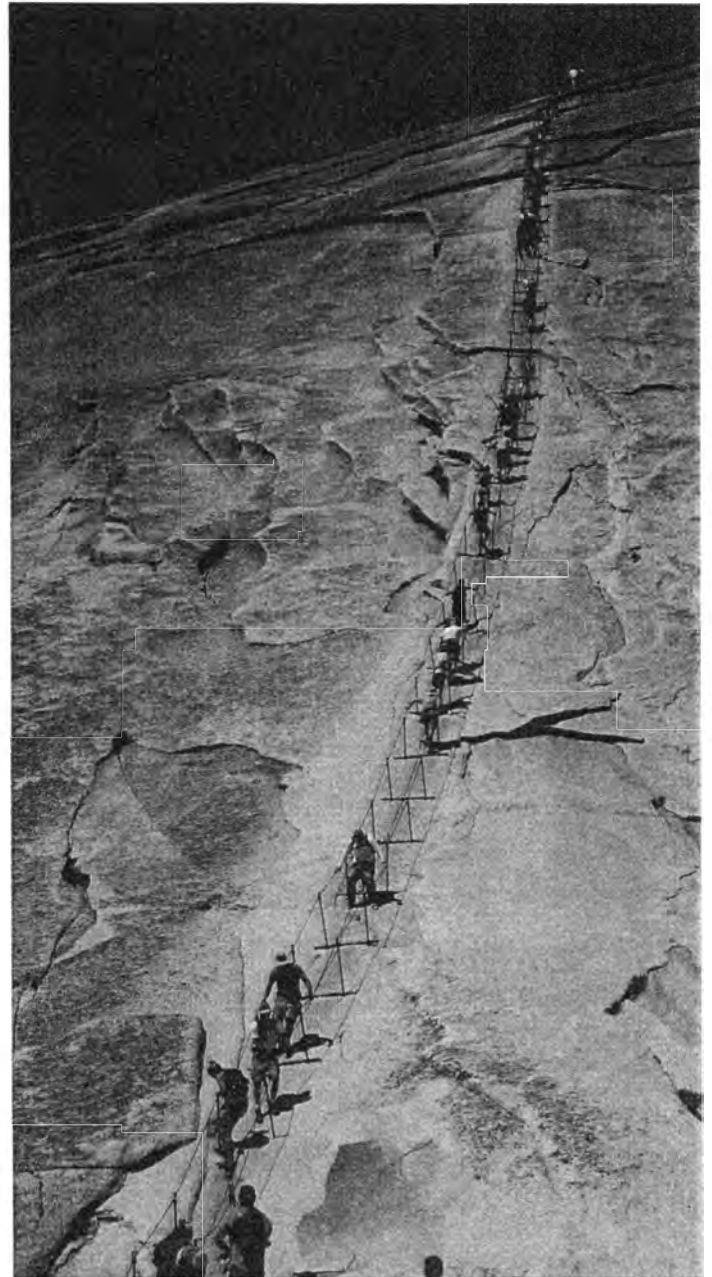
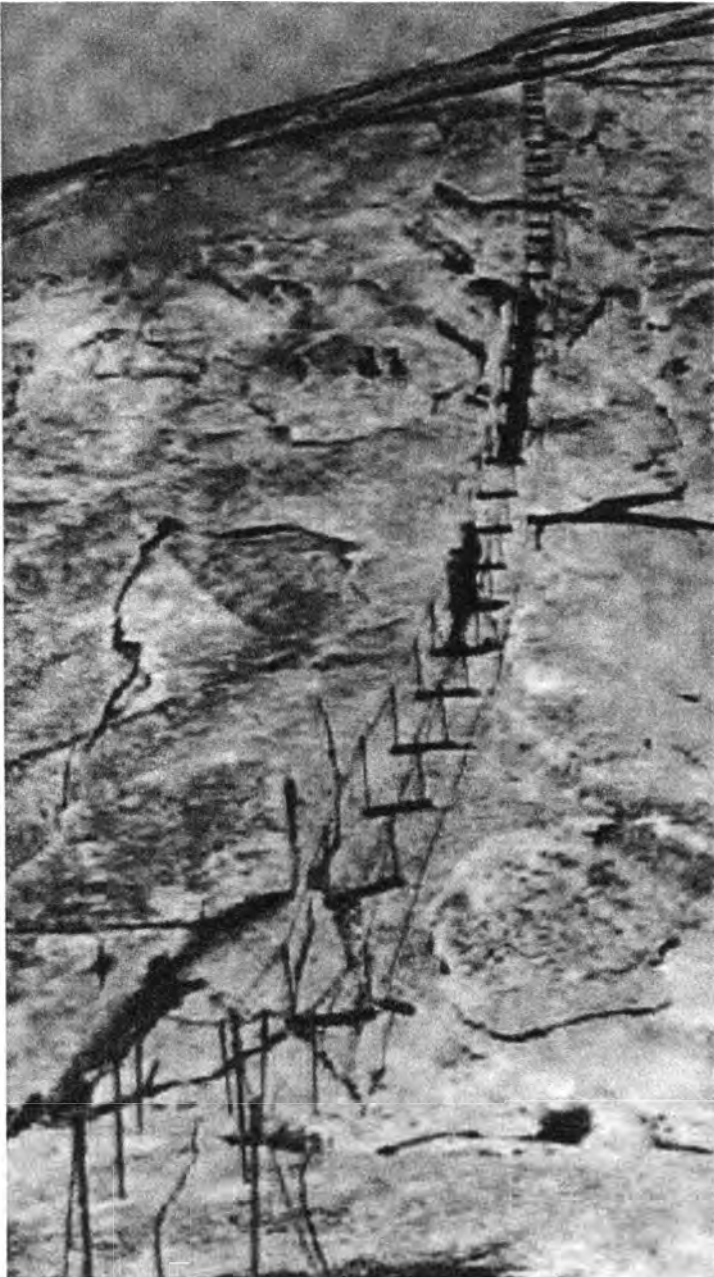
Name of Property

Mariposa, CA

County and State

II. Historic Photographs (Continued)

Photograph: Before and after images of the Half Dome cables in 1919 and 2010, illustrating the continuity of location and setting.
Photographer: Historic (unknown), Contemporary (Daniel Schaible)
Date: 1919, 2010
Photograph Location: Yosemite Research Library (Neg. no: YM-12, 034)



Half Dome Cables and Trail

Mariposa, CA

Name of Property

County and State

III. Photograph Log – Current Photographs of the Half Dome Cables and Trail, Mariposa County, California

Name of Property: Half Dome Cables and Trail
City or Vicinity: Yosemite National Park
County: Mariposa
State: CA
Photographer: Daniel Schaible, Alison Swing, and Lydia King
Date: 2010
Location of Original Digital Files: 5083 Foresta Road, El Portal, CA 95318
Number of Photographs: 9

Photo #1 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0001)
Remnants of the Anderson memorial arch and plaque, camera facing south.

Photo #2 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0002)
Stone steps leading up the Sub Dome Switchbacks, camera facing south.

Photo #3 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0003)
More stone steps leading up the Sub Dome Switchbacks, camera facing northwest.

Photo #4 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0004)
Looking up the Sub Dome Switchbacks, including views of retaining walls, camera facing west.

Photo #5 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0005)
View of the Half Dome cables from the top of Sub Dome, camera facing west.

Photo #6 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0006)
View (looking up) of the Half Dome cables taken from their base, camera facing west.

Photo #7 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0007)
Detail of Half Dome cables, showing stanchions, cross-members, and chain-link anchors, camera facing east.

Photo #8 (CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0008)
Detail of drill hole taken between the Half Dome cables, possibly one of Anderson's original drill holes, camera facing downward.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _____ Page _____

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 12000494 Date Listed: 8/15/2012

Half Dome Cables and Trail Mariposa CA
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

8/15/2012

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Significance:

The areas of significance *Transportation* and *Architecture* are removed from the nomination. *Landscape Architecture* is added as an area of significance.
[The majority of the recreational trails located in parks that are listed in the National Register use Landscape Architecture and Entertainment/Recreation as the primary areas of significance, rather than transportation and architecture, unless the built resources are of substantial scale and architectural design or the route served as part of an important transportation network or system linking important travel nodes.]

These clarifications were confirmed with the CA SHPO and NPS FPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Half Dome Cables and Trail
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Mariposa

DATE RECEIVED: 6/29/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/27/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/10/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/15/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000494

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

 ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Half Dome Cables and Trail are locally significant under National Register Criteria A, B and C, in the areas of Recreation/Entertainment and Landscape Architecture. First established in 1919 by the Sierra Club, the Half Dome Cables and Trail represent a physical link between the earliest efforts to "conquer" the rock face of Half Dome in the late nineteenth century and the development of modern recreational amenities for the growing numbers of park visitors after the turn of the century. George G. Anderson's initial ascent of Half Dome in 1875 has been credited with ushering in the era of "technical climbing" at Yosemite. Later climbers of the smooth, featureless granite rock face followed Anderson's route and climbing aids until the creation of the current Sierra Club trail system up the east slope in 1919. While the majority of the physical resources identified with this property relate to the 1919 recreational cable route developed by the Sierra Club, the general route and climbing trail up the face of Half Dome remain consistent from the 1870s George Anderson era to the present. The exact route of Anderson may not be known, although small anchorage features within the current alignment are thought to represent Anderson climbing route. More importantly, in the general view of the park and climbing community, the current and historic Anderson trails share a common heritage and continuity at this location, adding to the recreational value of the modern ascent.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept CRITERIA AB+C

REVIEWER PAUL R. LUSIGNAU DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

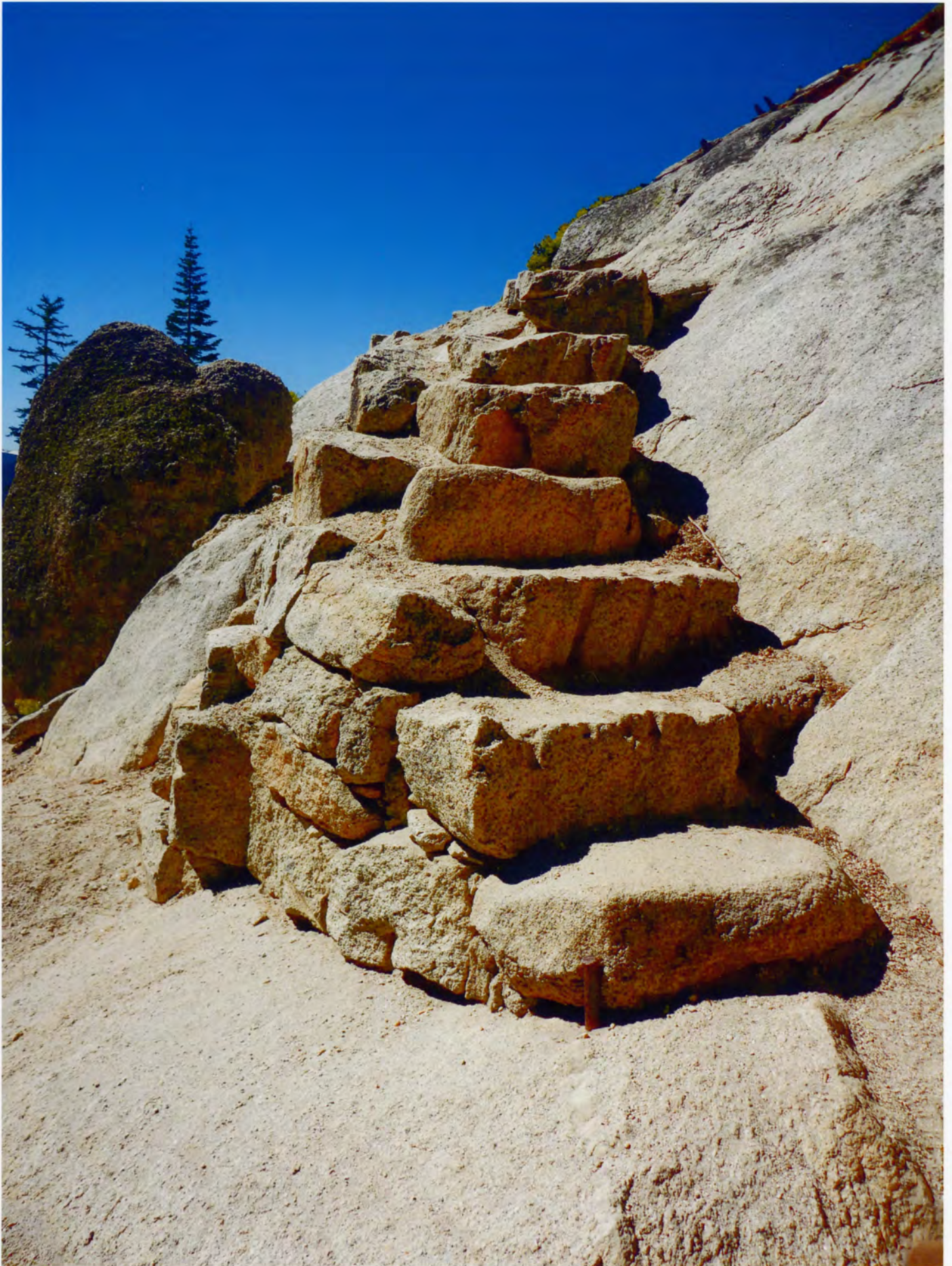
TELEPHONE DATE 8/15/2012

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

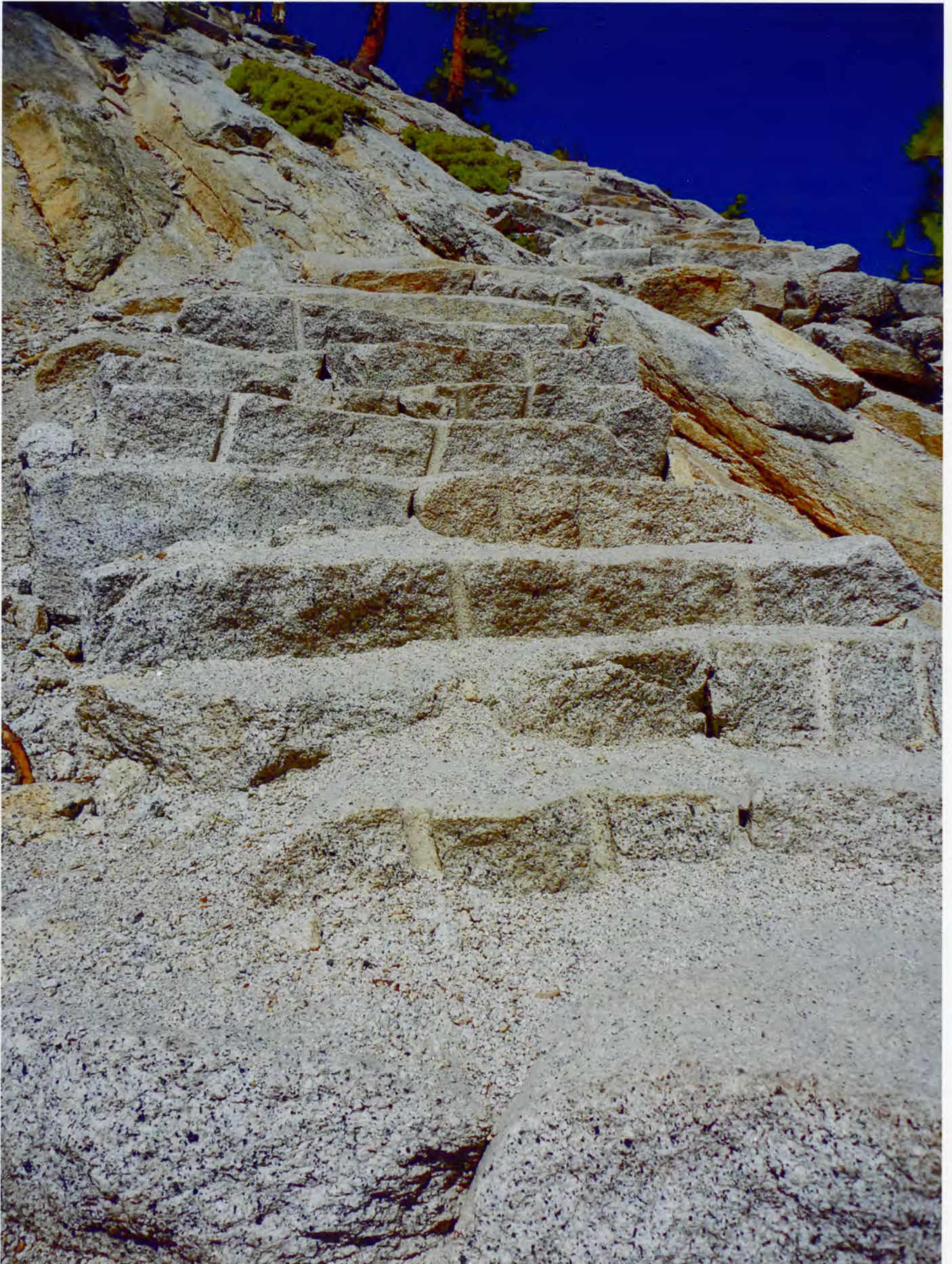
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0001



CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0002



CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0003



CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0004



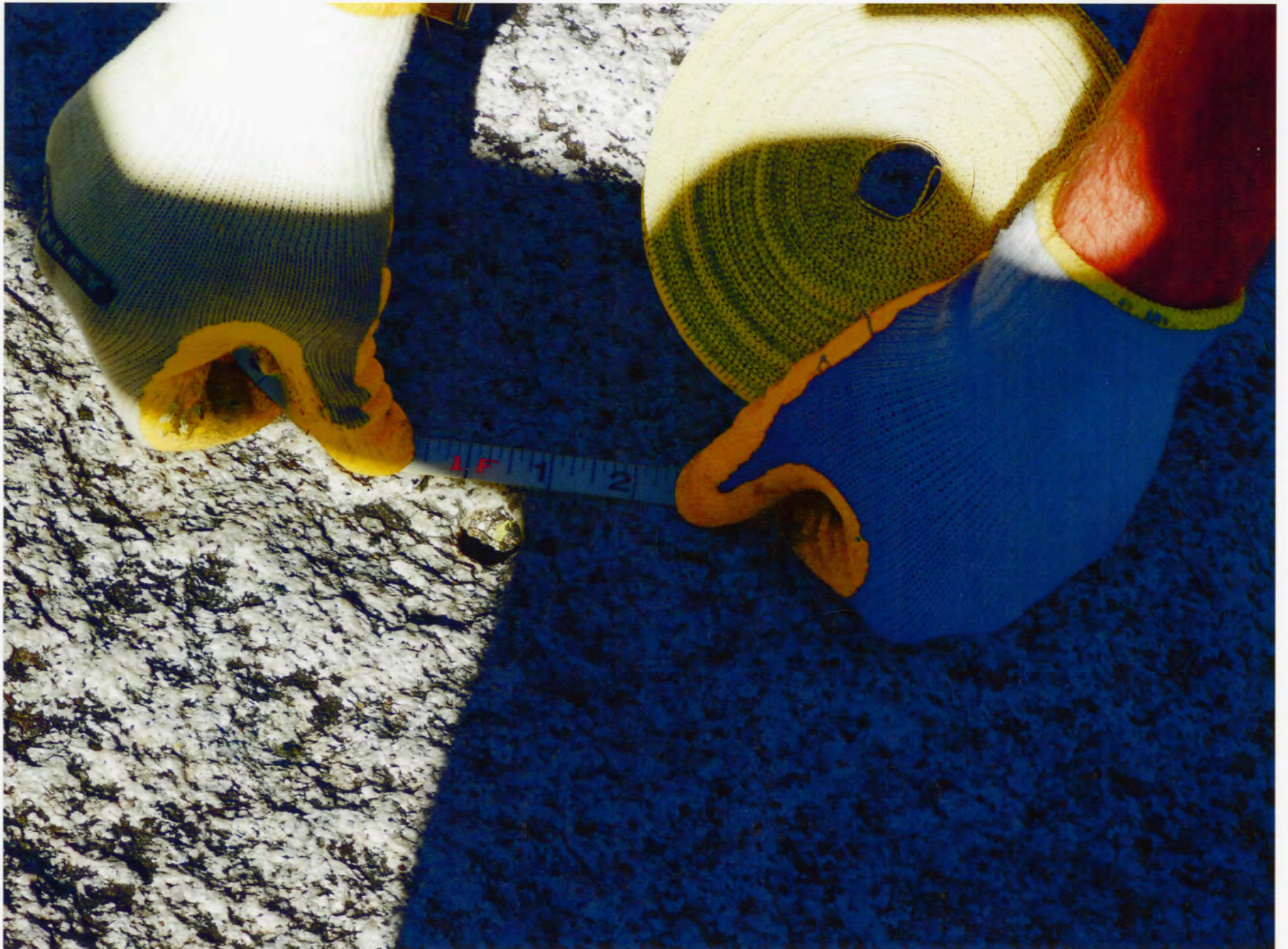
CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0005



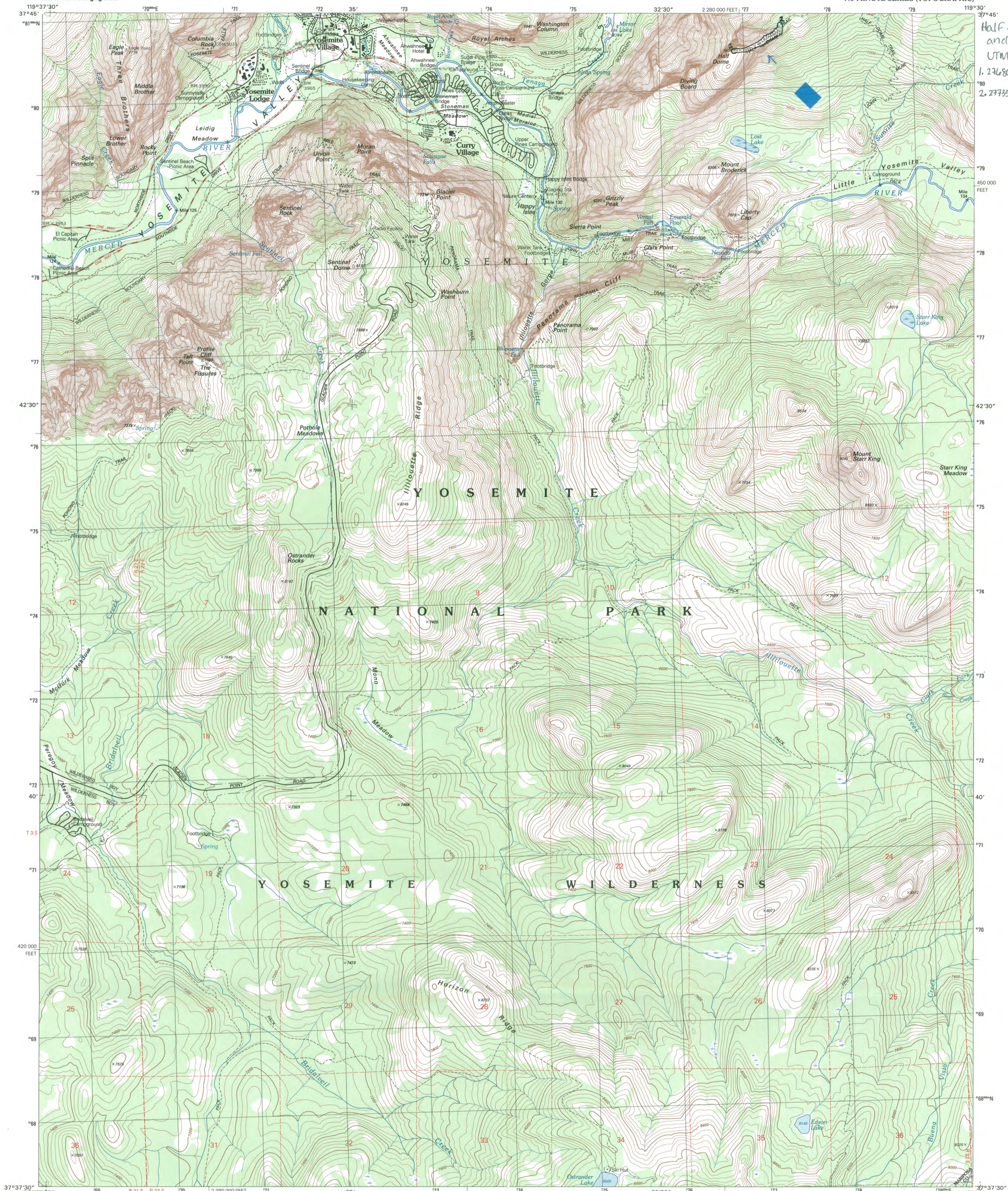
CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0006



CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0007

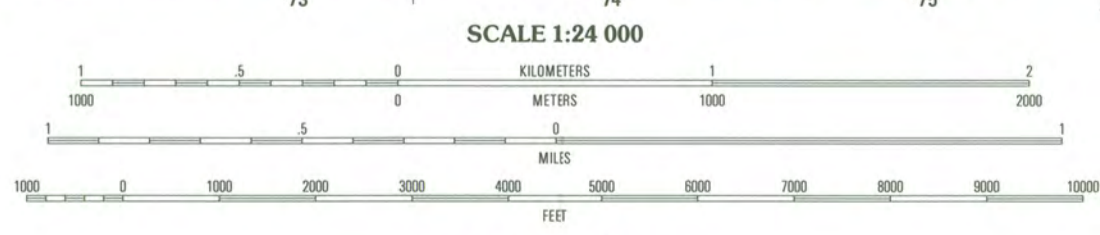
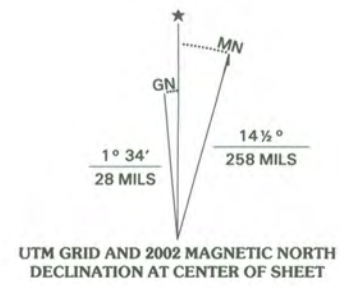


CA_Mariposa County_Half Dome Cables and Trail_0008



Half Dome Cable and Trail
UTM Zone 11
1. 276800E 4180459N
2. 277335E 4180453N

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Derived from imagery taken 1985 and other sources. Photoprinted using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Public Land Survey System and survey control current as of 1992. Boundaries verified 2002.
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 11 10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System of 1927 (zone 5).
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map. Where omitted, land lines have not been established.

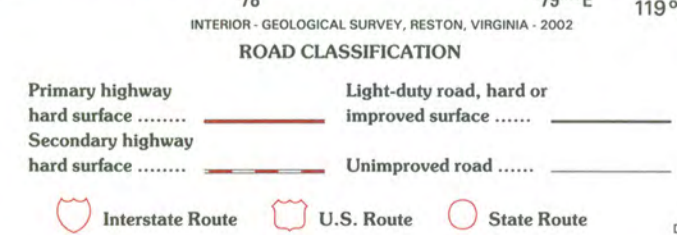


QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

1 Tamarack Flat
2 Yosemite Falls
3 Tenaya Lake
4 El Capitan
5 Merced Peak
6 Wawona
7 Mariposa Grove
8 Sing Peak

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES



HALF DOME, CA
1997
NIMA 2059 II NE-SERIES V895



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225. A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.





United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H32 (YOSE-RMS)

CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

FEB 13 2012

Dr. Stephanie Toothman
FPO/Associate Director
Cultural Resources
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Room 3128 MIB
Washington, DC 20240

Attention: Ms. Alexis Abernathy, National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, 8th Floor, #2280
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Toothman:

We are pleased to enclose the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the *Half Dome Cables and Trail* (CD enclosed), located within Yosemite National Park. As you have been previously notified, the California State Historic Preservation Officer Milford Wayne Donaldson has concurred that *Half Dome Cables and Trail* is eligible for listing at the local level of significance in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and Transportation under Criterion A as one of the earliest trails to a Yosemite Valley high mountain summit and as one of the most challenging and popular hikes at Yosemite that has proven to be an enduring attraction for adventure seekers; under Criterion B for its association with George Anderson, a pioneer in the sport of mountaineering and rock climbing whose accomplishments are still widely remembered and interpreted at Yosemite; and under Criterion C for its innovative design and construction in that it utilized specialized tools and techniques to aid in the ascent of Half Dome that had not been previously used in U.S. rock climbing.

The Branch of History, Architecture and Landscapes at Yosemite has completed the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In addition to California State Historic Preservation Officer the nomination has been reviewed by both Yosemite National Park and NPS Pacific West Region (PWR) Office staff. At PWR, Historian Charles Palmer reviewed the draft document and provided substantial direction. Reviewers at Yosemite included Historical Architect Shawn Lingo, Historical Landscape Architect/Project Manager Kimball Koch and Chief of the History, Architecture and Landscapes Branch David Humphrey. Additionally, the document has been reviewed by retired Yosemite Historian Jim Snyder and Half Dome enthusiast and author Rick Deutsch.

Please direct questions, comments and listing to Mr. Kimball Koch, acting Historic Preservation Officer, by telephone at 209.379.1364, by facsimile at 209.379.1149, via e-mail at kimball_koch@nps.gov, or by U.S. mail to the address above.

Thank you for your work protecting California's irreplaceable cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

Don L. Neubacher
Superintendent

Enclosure: CD-ROM with native Word doc. file and a pdf.

cc w/out enclosures: Linda Mazzu, Chief, Resources Management and Science, YOSE
Kimball Koch, acting Historic Preservation Officer, YOSE
David Humphrey, Chief of the History, Architecture and Landscapes Branch, YOSE
Daniel Schaible, Historical Landscape Architect, YOSE



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240



June 25, 2012

Memorandum

To: Acting Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

From: Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, National Park Service

Subject: National Register Nomination for Half Dome Cables and Trail, Yosemite National Park

Robert M. [Signature]
6/25/2012

I am forwarding the National Register nomination for the Half Dome Cables and Trail in Yosemite National Park. The Park History Program has reviewed the nomination and found the property eligible under Criteria A, B, and C, with areas of significance of Entertainment/Recreation, Transportation, and Architecture.