

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: 14000410

Date Listed: 7/18/2014

Snow Creek Ski Hut  
Property Name

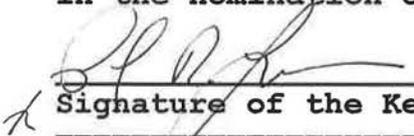
Mariposa  
County

CA  
State

Yosemite National Park MPS  
Multiple Name

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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

7/18/2014  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

**Location:**

The street address is amended to read: *Off Tenaya Lake Trail; westerly shoulder of Mt. Watkins.*

**Classification:**

The name of the related multiple property listing should read: *Yosemite National Park MPS.*  
The Number of Previously Listed Resources should read: *0*

**Function:**

The appropriate subcategory for the property is amended to add: *Domestic/Camp (seasonal residence).* [All selected subcategories should be taken from the authorized list of terms whenever possible.]

**Significance:**

*Education* is deleted as an Area of Significance. [The significance of the property under the theme of education is not fully developed in the current narrative. While the property may have association to the Park's objectives of expose visitors to the full breadth of Park resources, the theme is not specifically addressed.]

The Significant Dates that postdate the period of significance (*2004, 2006*) are deleted.  
[All significant dates must fall within the identified period of significance.]

**Bibliographical References:**

The property was not previously determined eligible by the Keeper of the National Register.  
[The determination was made by the NPS for compliance purposes only.]

These clarifications were confirmed with the NPS FPO office.

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DISTRIBUTION: National Register property file; Nominating Authority

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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 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 Snow Creek Ski Hut  
other names/site number Snow Creek Cabin, Snow Creek Lodge, Yosemite National Park Building  
No. BC03450

### 2. Location

street & number N/A  not for publication  
city or town Yosemite National Park  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  
Adrian A. Natta, Deputy FPO June 4, 2014  
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.  
Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer California 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] 7/10/2014  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**Snow Creek Ski Hut**  
Name of Property

**Mariposa, CA**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	2	buildings
		district
		site
1		structure
		object
2	2	<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC – Lodging**
- RECREATION & CULTURE – Outdoor**  
Recreation
- OTHER – Snow Survey Shelter / National Park**  
Service Ranger Patrol Cabin

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC – Lodging**
- RECREATION & CULTURE – Outdoor**  
Recreation
- OTHER – National Park Service Ranger Patrol**  
Cabin

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- OTHER – Swiss Chalet Style**

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: **STONE – Granite rubble**
- walls: **WOOD – Logs and sugar pine shingles**
- roof: **WOOD – Sugar pine shingles**

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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 paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Snow Creek Ski Hut is located on the westerly shoulder of Mt. Watkins within the backcountry wilderness of Yosemite National Park in California. The boundary area, approximately one and a half acres, encompasses all contributing and non-contributing resources, as well as a distinguishable clearing within a dense subalpine forest of pines and firs. The Snow Creek Ski Hut is centrally located within the clearing, while secondary resources – such as a shed, outhouse, and well – are located along its periphery. The ski hut is a one and one-half story, log-frame building with a modified saltbox form. It was constructed in the Swiss Chalet style. The building is rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 29' by 21', with a small kitchen pantry extending from the west façade. The exterior is finished with stained, double-course sugar pine shakes, peeled vertical logs, and shutters painted in a decorative motif. The building has a moderately pitched roof clad in single-course shakes and a modest foundation of granite rubble laid in a recessed mortar bed. The architectural details and use of local materials gives the building a rusticated charm reminiscent of mountain chalets of the Swiss Alps. The interior living space consists of a living room, kitchen, small bedroom, mudroom and storage area, and two loft bedrooms. The Snow Creek Ski Hut is in good condition and retains all seven aspects of historic integrity.

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**Narrative Description***Setting*

The Snow Creek Ski Hut was constructed to serve as winter lodging during guided ski-touring expeditions in the highcountry of Yosemite National Park in California. The location was strategically selected within a day's trek from the park's administrative and recreational center, Yosemite Valley, and within close proximity to superb ski terrain. As discussed further in Section 8, during the period of significance the ski hut became the primary access point from the valley to the Sierra Nevada highcountry during the winter months.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut sits at an elevation of 7,750 feet on the gradual, westerly shoulder of Mt. Watkins. A mile south of Mt. Watkins the terrain plummets approximately 2,500 feet to the floor of Tenaya Canyon, which forms the northeastern end of Yosemite Valley. Access to the ski hut is limited to foot or stock traffic from the Mirror Lake Trailhead in Yosemite Valley, 5.4 miles by trail to the southwest, or from an unmarked trailhead stemming from Tioga Road, 3.2 miles by trail to the north. Historically, winter ski routes began in Yosemite Valley and followed an established hiking trail corridor. Routes were intermittently blazed with painted scrap metal affixed high in the trees, clear of snowpack. Today, many of these markers still exist and are still utilized by skiers. The first mile of the route meanders northeast through the scenic Tenaya Canyon, roughly paralleling Tenaya Creek, to the junction with Snow Creek Trail. From this junction, the Snow Creek Trail ascends nearly 2,500 vertical feet to the north rim of Tenaya Canyon. The route then turns northeast and connects to the Tenaya Lake Trail, which runs roughly east-west. Less than half a mile east of this junction a small unmarked social trail spurs south towards the Snow Creek Ski Hut.

The building is centrally located within a distinguishable clearing approximately 900 feet south of the Tenaya Lake Trail. Before reaching the building the social trail first passes through a large seasonal meadow and forested areas. The clearing occupies a relatively level parcel of land measuring 150 feet by fifty feet. A very gradual slope is

recognizable by the increasing height of the building's foundation wall from south to north. The clearing has dry, sandy soil littered with pine needles and a few downed tree snags. Due to the buildings remote setting, no established property boundary has been designated or delineated by the National Park Service. A boundary area of 1.62 acres for the Snow Creek Ski Hut has been determined by Yosemite's Branch of History, Architecture, and Landscapes for purposes of this nomination. The boundary line forms a circular perimeter extending 150 feet from the building. This area encompasses the clearing, as well as, all contributing and non-contributing resources.

The terrain beyond the property rises steeply to the southeast to the peak of Mt. Watkins. The climate, typical of the Sierra Nevada highcountry, is characterized by dry, cool, and short summers and cold, wet, long winters. Snow usually begins to fall in mid-October and may accumulate as much as nine feet of more within the property boundaries. The vegetation surrounding the clearing is Sierra Nevada Subalpine Mesic forest with a dense array of pines and firs. Secondary structures are located along the periphery of the clearing; approximately fifty to ninety feet from the Snow Creek Ski Hut. These structures include a well lined with barked logs, a metal outhouse, and a wooden shed. The well is the only contributing resource to the property and will be discussed below and also within Section 8. The outhouse and shed were present only after the period of significance and do not add to the interpretation of the property. Other minor resources, such as four metal bear boxes<sup>1</sup> and granite rubble lined fire pit, were also added to the property following the period of significance and are not inventoried for purposes of this nomination.

### **Snow Creek Ski Hut**

The Snow Creek Ski Hut was constructed in 1929 to building specifications produced by Yosemite Park and Curry Company (YP&CC) architect, Eldridge T. Spencer. Spencer designed the ski hut to incorporate vernacular design elements of Swiss and German mountain chalets. The building is one and one-half story, rectangular in plan with a pantry extending from the west façade. The building has a saltbox form capped by a moderately pitched gable roof. A robust structural frame of log poles was used to ensure the ski hut could endure the heavy snow loads of the Sierra Nevada. These structural members are visible within the exposed overhanging eaves of the roof. Exterior cladding consists of stained double-course shakes, vertical peeled logs, and local granite rubble. Exterior accent shutters are affixed to all windows and are painted with a green and white herringbone pattern. The interior living space consists of an enclosed entryway, living room, kitchen, food pantry, and three bedrooms.

#### *Exterior*

The Snow Creek Ski Hut is a one and one-half story, log-framed building. The building has a rectangular footprint measuring approximately 32.5' by 22.5' and reaches a height of 17.5' at its gable peak. The ski hut has a saltbox form with a central cubic massing and a single story eastern extension. This extension accommodates an enclosed entryway accessed by a small portico located on the south façade. (The entry will be described in detail below.) A rectangular extension, approximately nine feet in length and five feet deep, is centrally located on the west façade to accommodate a kitchen pantry.

The building is supported by log pole stringers laying directly on dry-laid granite rubble piers and a foundation wall of random granite rubble masonry. Stones for the foundation wall were harvested locally at the time

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<sup>1</sup> Bear boxes are metal food caches provided by the park for hikers and campers as a natural resource management tactic to deter wild bears from habituating to human food. The boxes are approximately 4' wide, 2'tall, and 2.5' deep.

of construction and set in a recessed mortar bed. The height of the foundation adjusts to the natural contour of the surrounding land as it gently slopes north toward the meadow. The foundation wall increases from just a few inches at the southeast corner to twenty two and a half inches at the northwest corner. Small foundation vents, approximately eight inches high by fourteen inches wide, are incorporated into the north and south foundation wall.

The ski hut's exterior walls are finished with double-course shake siding with a fourteen inch reveal. Other National Park Service buildings within Yosemite constructed in the late 1920s and 1930s were clad in cedar shakes or shingles. However, based on building evidence park historic preservation staff has established that this concessioner building was originally constructed using sugar pine shakes. During restoration work completed in 2004 and 2006 Yosemite National Park Historic Preservation Crew personnel were able to examine original building materials. The original siding was found to be sugar pine shakes stained a dark reddish brown. Newly replaced shakes create a stark contrast against the weathered original material.

The bottom course of shakes within the gable ends flare outward atop a horizontal log pole to create the illusion of slight projection of the upper portion of the building. The western pantry extension is constructed with vertical log post walls and a shed roof that adjoins the main gable. The logs have been chinked with jute and lined with sheet metal from the interior. A log pole support brace is located on the west elevation of the pantry. Photographs from the 1980s to the 2000s show a succession of brace alterations; however, it is unclear when the structure was first put in place. Photographs from the 1980s show a horizontal log rail supported by two vertical log posts under the rafter tails of the failing pantry roof. The present support brace contains three additional, horizontal log rails.

The windows and accompanying shutters of the ski hut are accentuated architectural elements intended to contrast against the natural finishes of other building materials. This characteristic is commonly seen on Swiss and German mountain architecture. All window frames and sashes have been painted a Kelly green. Externally mounted casement shutters are painted with a green and white herringbone pattern. It is likely that these architectural elements were originally painted with Paris green, a popular coating for windows up until the 1950s. Paris green contained copper arsenate and was a reliable weather resistant material. On both the north and south facades, the main portion of the building contains a large six-lite casement window and two-lite casement window on the ground floor, as well as, a four-lite casement window within the gable ends. The four-lite windows were installed in 1930 to allow natural light into the loft bedrooms. The west elevation contains two windows flanking the pantry extension. The window north of the pantry is a two-lite casement window; the window south of the pantry is a single-lite awning window. The painted shutters are constructed of plywood and dimensional lumber with an exterior layer of galvanized sheet metal. This exterior layer was put in place during the time of construction to deter bears and aid in winterizing the ski hut. Shutters are secured by internally mounted upper and lower latches.

The entry is asymmetrically located along the south elevation of the ski hut. It consists of two narrow double doors that are finished with an exterior layer of painted galvanized sheet metal. A log portico structure was constructed sometime between 1990 and 2004 to shelter the entryway from high snow drifts. The structure consists of log post walls secured to a log sill plate and is capped by a south facing gable roof. During the period of significance, the entry was flanked by three, vertical log posts that tapered from approximately eight feet in height to four feet with no associated roofing structure.

The moderately pitched gable roof of the building is oriented on a roughly north-south axis. Over-hanging eaves feature exposed log rafters, five to six inches in diameter, and dimensional lumber sheathing boards. The roof

is clad in single-course, sugar pine shakes (ten inch reveal) and finished with a metal ridgecap. The building was last re-roofed in 2006. A cylindrical metal flue is located on the eastern face of the roof roughly near the building's center. Historic photographs show a second flue along the western face that would have led to the kitchen stove below. Since the stove is longer in use, the flue has been removed and the opening covered with roofing material. The building currently has three vertical log supports, independent from the main structure, located under the corners of the gable roof overhang. These supports were put in place following the period of significance to support the roof from heavy snow loads; however, the use of natural materials is in keeping with other exterior elements. By the 1980s, vertical supports were in place underneath the rafter tails along the east and west facades as well. These later supports were removed by the Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew in 2004 and 2006 during extensive stabilization efforts; however, the vertical supports at the corners of the gable roof were left in place for safety. During this time, nearly all rafters above the eastern extension were replaced in-kind, sistered to the remaining rafters, and were given notched ends to match existing fabric.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut is presently in overall good condition with some minimal fabric deterioration from extreme weather conditions and damaged caused by black bears. The present state of the building can be largely attributed to extensive stabilization and preservation efforts completed by the Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew in 2004 and 2006. Further description of work completed during these projects can be found within the "Modifications" section below. Thoughtful construction of the Snow Creek Ski Hut exemplifies the Swiss Chalet style and stays true to the style's fundamental principles. Architectural elements found on the building characteristic of the style include the predominant use of natural materials, wide overhanging eaves, stained shake siding, and exposed log framing. The use of local materials and natural elements is a key element to the Swiss Chalet style and serves to harmonize the building with the surrounding landscape.

### *Interior*

The primary living space of the Snow Creek Ski hut is located within the central massing of the building and creates a roughly square floorplan. The two extensions on the eastern and western facades are comprised of auxiliary spaces. The entire interior area of the building constitutes approximately 1,100 square feet.

The primary living spaces of the ski hut consist of an entrance hallway, bedroom, kitchen, living room, and two loft bedrooms. These spaces wrap around a central enclosed stairway creating a circular flow pattern. This floor plan has remained consistent throughout the history of the building with no significant modifications. During the period of significance, what is currently considered the living room served as a multi-functional space for activities associated with dining, living, and sleeping. Flooring throughout the ski hut is stained, three and a half inch Douglas fir tongue and groove. Interior walls are finished with wood fiber wallboard and unpainted wooden battens. This wall treatment is original to the construction of the building and has been documented in a historic photograph dating to the period of significance. Stained dimensional lumber baseboards, approximately four inches in height, wrap around the perimeter of each room. All interior doorjamb and windows have been finished with a narrower, two and a half inch, trim. During the 2006 restoration, the Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew removed all existing wallboard in order to install insulation and hardware cloth throughout the building. The use of hardware cloth in remote backcountry cabins has proven to be extremely successful in deterring rodents and other pests who would otherwise degrade the historic fabric. New wood fiber wallboard and wooden battens were then installed to match materials in-kind and the baseboards were reattached. The rooms are separated by frame-and-plank style doors. All door hardware, with the exception of minor fittings such as brass pulls, appears to date to the period of significance and is still in good working condition. Ceilings of the first floor have been left unfinished exposing

stained log floor joists and the tongue and groove flooring of the lofts above. The ceilings of the loft bedrooms follows the pitch of the gable roof and have been finished with wallboard and battens placed in between the log rafters. The two loft bedrooms are accessed by a steep and narrow staircase. Each stair was constructed of a quarter-round log and left roughly hewn. A thin peeled log is affixed to the north wall of the stairway and serves as a hand railing.

The kitchen contains built-in open shelving along the exterior south wall, a cast iron wood burning stove in the interior northeast corner, and a sink along the exterior west wall. Both the sink and stove are no longer functioning. The stove's flue has been removed and the ceiling opening patched where it would have continued through to the exterior roof. The sink basin remains but all plumbing fixtures have been disassembled and removed. The sole heat source for the ski hut is a cast iron wood stove located near the south wall of the living room. A wood burning stove is known to have been installed in this location during the period of significance; however, the particular fixture that is present was installed in 2006. Furniture placed in the living room is modest with a rustic charm. The pieces consist of wooden plank tables, half-log benches, several wooden folding chairs, and a dimensional lumber bookcase. The majority of the furniture pieces within the living room date to the period of significance and have been documented in a historic photograph. The bedrooms contain metal military-style bunk frames.

The western extension of the building can be accessed through the kitchen. This space is completely lined with galvanized sheet metal and functions as a storage area for non-perishable items. During the period of significance, this space was used for food storage and lined with sheet metal to deter bears from tearing into the building. Log pole shelving is located along the east and north walls.

The eastern extension serves as the entryway and mudroom for the ski hut. The flooring is local granite fieldstone placed on grade laid with thick-set mortared joints. The interior west wall contains a decorative entry door to the main living spaces and is clad in double-course sugar pine shakes to correspond to the exterior fabric. The entry door is a frame-and-plank style door, much like the interior doors; however, it contains additional wooden detailing that is imitative of large iron hinges. Trim molding surrounding the door is painted green to match the exterior architectural accents. A historical document mentions that the eastern extension was constructed in 1930, a year after the cabin was built. An early YP&CC brochure is the only known photographic documentation of the building as it was constructed in 1929. This extension provided an indoor toilet and much needed storage space. Other interior surfaces within the entryway have been left unfinished exposing structural materials and exterior cladding. A floor to ceiling log crib brace, approximately four and a half feet wide by nine feet in length, is located against the east wall. The brace is used as firewood and hand tool storage. A small enclosed space, now serving as storage closet, is located along the far north wall. The space is elevated from the granite fieldstone and finished with tongue and groove flooring. During the period of significance, this space served as a pit toilet. The bench seat and exterior sewage pipe, which leads to an underground receptacle, is still in place but is no longer functioning as a privy.

### *Modifications*

The Snow Creek Ski Hut maintains a high degree of historic integrity and has had very minimal modifications since its period of significance, 1929-1934. The overall usage of space, layout, architectural design, and the bulk of the historic fabric has remained constant over time. As mentioned above, the eastern extension was built within a year of the ski hut's completion. At this time windows were also added to the gable ends to provide natural light within the loft bedrooms. In 2004 and 2006, the building underwent extensive stabilization and preservation work by the Yosemite Historic Preservation (YHP) Crew. All work adhered to the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and any necessary fabric replacement was done using in-kind materials. Prior to preservation work, the building was given a formal condition assessment by the YHP Crew and architectural drawings were produced to document the building as-is.

*Exterior Changes:*<sup>ii</sup>

- The west foundation was entirely re-laid during 2004 stabilization efforts. This section retains the character and pattern of the existing historic foundation.
- An entry portico was added sometime between 1990 and 2004.
- Preservation treatments during the 2006 restoration:
  - Approximately 20% of exterior shake siding has been replaced using comparable material due to severe deterioration from harsh weather conditions and bears. Modern materials can easily be distinguished from historic fabric.
  - Removal and replacement of the deteriorated roofing material. Cedar shakes were replaced with new sugar pine shake roofing material at this time.
  - Eight failed log rafters were replaced using in-kind materials.
  - Approximately 100' of failed one by six roof sheathing was replaced using in-kind materials.
  - Flooring joists were lifted and supported with new posts to straighten and level the building.

*Interior Changes:*

- The privy within the eastern extension is no longer functioning in its original capacity. The space is now being utilized as a storage closet.
- The cast iron kitchen stove is no longer functioning; the flue has been dismantled and removed.
- Asbestos heat shield material was removed from the kitchen floor and wall near the kitchen stove during the 2004 stabilization project.
- Preservation treatments during the 2006 restoration:
  - Interior log posts were added to correct the sagging ridgeline.
  - Hardware cloth and insulation has been installed behind interior wallboards throughout the building.
  - Original wood stove in the living room was replaced with a modern cast iron wood stove.

**Contributing Resources***Well*

A well located within the property boundaries is the only contributing resource to the Snow Creek Ski Hut. It is located roughly ninety feet northeast of the ski hut on the southern edge of a seasonal meadow. The location of the well was documented in the "Story of Snow Creek Lodge", a memoir of the construction of Snow Creek Ski Hut by Mary Curry Tresidder. It is known that a well was originally constructed for the workman adjacent to the immediate setting of the ski hut and was used later as the primary water source during visits to the area. Based on the location and design, it appears this is the original well and therefore it is a contributing resource.

<sup>ii</sup> 2006 preservation notes were summarized from "2006 Snow Creek Cabin Restoration: Yosemite Fund Status Report", completed by Rod Kenec, Exhibit Specialist, Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew.

The well is approximately eight feet deep by four feet square. The interior walls and rim are lined with small unpeeled logs, approximately five inches in diameter, laid horizontally and are supported by vertical logs in each corner. Small metal tie-straps have been installed within the upper portion of the well for added stability. An independent square capping lid has been built to rest atop the well. It is constructed of more modern materials – dimensional lumber, plywood, and clad with shake remnants. A well-cover is known to have been used during the period of significance; however, its construction and form are unclear. The well is in good, sound condition. The historic integrity and the well's significance to the overall interpretation of the property will be discussed in Section 8.

### **Non-Contributing Resources**

#### *Storage Shed & Outhouse*

Non-contributing resources located within the property boundary of Snow Creek Ski Hut consists of a wooden storage shed and metal outhouse. Both of these small auxiliary buildings are located approximately fifty feet to the south of the ski hut along the periphery of the clearing. No known historical documents mention any auxiliary building(s) within the property boundaries. Neither building independently meets the National Register of Historic Places criteria.

The storage shed is constructed of log framing clad with sugar pine shingles. An addition on the west elevation provides clear evidence that the building was constructed in two separate phases. The earlier construction is a four foot by six foot storage space and exhibits a degree of craftsmanship. This section is clad with double-course shingles with a ten to twelve inch reveal, similar to the ski hut. The later addition extending the footprint approximately eighteen square feet to the west was much more haphazardly built. The structural components include log pole framing with dimensional lumber wall sheathing. Sill logs are partially submersed in dirt and exhibit significant rot. The roof of the building has collapsed and allows no shelter from the natural elements. Overall the building is in poor condition.

Similar architectural features on the storage shed – such as double-course siding and log pole framing – suggests the storage shed may have been constructed at the same time as the ski hut. Yosemite's Architectural Historian believes it is possible this building was used as a privy during the first winter occupation of the ski hut. During that time period, the ski hut did not contain an indoor privy. The eastern extension, completed in 1930, added an adjoining privy and storage space to the ski hut. The outdoor privy (or referred to as the storage shed) may have been abandoned by the Yosemite Park & Curry Company at this time. It is unclear what the building was used for when the later west extension was constructed. Evidence suggests that this addition was constructed well outside the period of significance. The storage shed is considered non-contributing due to the lack of historic documentation, its poor condition, and the non-conforming addition attached to the building.

The metal outhouse is approximately three feet square with a corrugated metal, shed roof. The outhouse is in fair condition due to weathering and deterioration. The overhanging eave of the shed roof above the entry has collapsed from heavy snow loads. The overall design of the outhouse is similar to privy structures dating to the 1970s or 1980s and therefore falls outside the period of significance.

**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.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

**ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION**

**EDUCATION**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**Period of Significance**

**1929 – 1934**

**Significant Dates**

**1929 – Snow Creek Ski Hut designed and constructed**

**1930 – Eastern addition constructed**

**1934 – Commercial operations ceased**

**2004 & 2006 – Snow Creek Ski Hut restored by Yosemite Historic Preservation crew**

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**N/A**

**Cultural Affiliation**

**N/A**

**Architect/Builder**

**Architect: Eldridge T. Spencer**

**Builder: Yosemite Park & Curry Company**

**(Employees: Bill Kat, Dick Michaelis, and Jules Fritsch)**

**Period of Significance (justification)**

1929 – 1934

The period of significance for the Snow Creek Ski Hut and its contributing resource is 1929-1934. This timeframe corresponds to the development of the Snow Creek Ski Hut and its initial ownership by Yosemite Park & Curry Company (YP&CC). The ski hut was the first known facility in the country to provide commercially guided ski-touring with overnight backcountry accommodations. The specific placement of the ski hut was decided upon in the winter of 1928-1929 by the President of YP&CC, Yosemite National Park Chief Engineer, and two men affiliated with the winter sports program in Yosemite. Architectural plans were produced by Eldridge T. Spencer the following summer and fall under the direct guidance of the YP&CC President. The ski hut and nearby well were constructed shortly after and opened for operations January 1930.

The ski hut retains its original footprint and has not been significantly altered since the period of significance. YP&CC ceased commercial operations of the ski lodge in 1934 with the opening of Badger Pass Ski Lodge, a larger and more accessible recreational facility for down-hill skiing. The period from 1929 to 1934 aligns with the architectural development of the Snow Creek Ski Hut, for Criterion C, and the buildings' functions to facilitate winter outdoor recreation in the western United States and tourism to Yosemite National Park, for Criterion A.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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

The Snow Creek Ski Hut is regionally significant under *Criterion A* as a building associated with the growth of winter outdoor recreation in the western United States and winter tourism to Yosemite National Park. Additionally, the ski hut is nationally significant under *Criterion A* as the first commercially guided ski-touring operation with overnight backcountry accommodations in the United States. The ski hut was the initial phase to the development of a ski-hut system in the High Sierra of California. Guests had the option of two to six day tour packages that included ski instruction from expert ski-mountaineers, cooked meals, and lodging. The Snow Creek Ski Hut promoted skiing to the Sierra Nevada region and became a precursor to Badger Pass Ski Lodge, one of California's earliest commercially developed downhill ski resorts, as well as, a system of ski-touring huts constructed by the Sierra Club near Lake Tahoe in Northern California beginning in the late 1930s. The Snow Creek Ski Hut is locally significant under *Criterion C* as a concessionaire lodge that incorporated elements of the Swiss Chalet style. Architectural influences of nineteenth century German and Swiss architecture were commonly incorporated in the early National Park Service concessionaire buildings across the nation.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut continues to function in its original capacity as a winter shelter for outdoor enthusiasts, as well as, a patrol cabin for the National Park Service. The ski hut is currently owned by Yosemite National Park and is managed as a historic resource. It is in good condition and retains all seven aspects of historic integrity, as defined by the National Register of Historic Places.

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

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*Historical Context*

Visitor accessibility and accommodations have long been an integral part of Yosemite National Park's management objectives. Early administrators saw the need to manage the park more as a recreational resort rather than focusing on strict natural resource conservation practices that are common today. Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park Service and a leading provocateur for the organized development of Yosemite Valley, incorporated access and accommodation improvement among his top priorities. He believed it imperative to fully and efficiently develop park resources for the pleasure of the public, which would in turn result in profits from increased tourist dollars, and thus strengthen the National Park Service. Mather was quoted in 1915 saying, "Scenery is a splendid thing when it is viewed by a man who is in a contented frame of mind. Give him a poor breakfast after he has had a bad night's sleep, and he will not care how fine your scenery is. He is not going to enjoy it." Even naturalists of the day realized that some concession had to be made to provide for the comforts and convenience of tourists.

Lodging and other infrastructure associated with tourist activities were developed and operated by park concessionaires. Hotels sprawled across the floor of Yosemite Valley and along roadways throughout the park. In 1916, visitor accommodations expanded into the far reaches of the Yosemite backcountry for the first time in the form of High Sierra Camps. By 1924, there were four High Sierra camps, which proved to be immensely popular and are still in existence today. The camps were an innovative concept and shining example of a joint venture between the National Park Service and a concessionaire to encourage visitors to experience the scenic wonders of the High Sierra Nevada. All the comforts and leisure activities provided by concessionaires, however, focused solely on the summer season. Both the Yosemite Park & Curry Company concessionaire and Yosemite National Park's Superintendent saw the potential to expand tourist infrastructure to accommodate winter guests and develop Yosemite into a year-round park.

**Winter Sports in Yosemite**

Winter visitation to Yosemite National Park began to increase substantially in the late 1920s due to: improvement in accessibility to the park, construction of proper winter accommodations, and the unwavering commitment to transform the park into the center for outdoor winter recreation in the Sierra Nevada by the park concessionaire. The park first opened its doors "year-round" in 1907, when the Yosemite Valley Railroad expanded its lines to the park's western boundary. Winter travel into the park, however, was still treacherous and deterred most guests. In 1926, California State Highway 140, or the "All-Weather Highway", was constructed to offer safe passage through the mountainous Merced River Canyon to Yosemite Valley. A year after the highway's completion, the luxurious Ahwahnee Hotel was opened specifically to cater to winter guests, as well as, the wealthy clientele of the concessionaire. Beginning in 1927, the number of winter guests visiting the park proliferated substantially. The Yosemite Park & Curry Company (YP&CC) quickly embarked on providing a wealth of winter recreational activities, sports, and entertainment. The growth was fueled not only by the economic opportunities to attract visitors year-round, but also by the immense passion for outdoor winter recreation held by the owners, Donald Tresidder and his wife Mary Curry Tresidder. Over the next decade, the National Park Service, dependent on visitor

use for appropriations in the lean years of the Great Depression, heartily endorsed the expansion of visitor activities during the winter months.

Prior to the 1920s, skiing and winter sports were relatively unfamiliar to Americans and only a few enterprises in the country were attempting to endorse these sports. In 1928, the Tresidders traveled to the first Winter Olympics held in St. Moritz, Switzerland. Upon returning to their beloved Yosemite, they conjured up a grand vision of transforming the park into the "Switzerland of the west" and wasted no time in orchestrating it. The YP&CC formed the Yosemite Winter Club for the development of winter activities and the Yosemite Ski School. The ski school was the first of its kind in the west and among the first handful of ski schools established in the United States. An elaborate ice rink and toboggan run were constructed and a small ski hill cleared. Winter events and activities included: ice skating, hockey, tobogganing, sleigh rides, skijoring, dog sledding, skiing, winter carnivals, and collegiate competitions. The park quickly became a hub for winter enthusiasts, as well as, an outstanding contributor and leader in winter sports. So impressive were the improvements to the parks winter infrastructure that in 1929 the Director of the National Park Service placed Yosemite in a bid for the 1932 Winter Olympics. Among the top contenders were Yosemite National Park, Lake Tahoe (also in California), and Lake Placid in New York. Yosemite's development and winter lodging made a compelling argument; however, in the end Lake Placid won the toss up.

### **Snow Creek Ski Hut**

In the formative years of winter sports in Yosemite National Park most of the activities were centered around Yosemite Valley, but the history of winter recreation in the park would be forever altered when Tresidder embarked on an ambitious plan to provide access into the mountainous interior during the winter months. Tresidder saw the future of Yosemite's winter sports in ski-touring. Drawing upon influences of ski hut systems in the European Alps, Tresidder envisioned multi-day High Sierra Nevada ski tours with backcountry accommodations and professional ski instructors. Although seasonal huts and shelter cabins had been built previously in other areas of the United States, this venture would be the first attempt at commercially guided ski touring with overnight accommodations in the nation.

Tresidder planned an experimental phase to see if his vision was viable and had the potential to turn profits. This initial phase included the construction of Snow Creek Ski Hut, temporary winter usage of two backcountry National Park Service ranger stations (the Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Stations), and the rehabilitation of the Glacier Point Mountain House<sup>iii</sup> for winter use. The ski hut and the ranger stations were located between 7,500 feet and 8,600 feet in elevation and were roughly ten miles apart from each other. These buildings were all situated beyond the north rim of Yosemite Valley, between it and Tuolumne Meadows. The Glacier Point Mountain House was isolated from the hut system on the south rim of the valley. Visitors were able to complete guided ski tours out and back from this location, which also provided overnight accommodations. The concessionaire "confidently expected" that ski-touring would be a huge success and envisioned the subsequent phase would be the transformation of the summer High Sierra Camps into winter ski huts. Spoken like a true outdoor enthusiast (and salesman) Tresidder boasted that the snow conditions and terrain of the Yosemite High

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<sup>iii</sup> The Glacier Point Mountain House was completely destroyed by fire in 1969.

Sierra Nevada was superior to any other in the country and paralleled that of the European mountain ranges. Snow Creek Ski Hut would serve as the gateway into this untapped winter wonderland of the Sierra Nevada.

In the winter of 1928-1929, Tresidder, Ernst DesBaillets (Director of the Yosemite Winter Club), Yosemite National Park Chief Engineer, and Jules Fritsch (a hired ski instructor) strategically selected a location for the Snow Creek Ski Hut along the north rim of Yosemite Valley. The remote location was within a day's trek of the valley floor and in close proximity to areas considered to have the heaviest snowfall in the park. To reach the ski hut, guided tours climbed the steep switch backs of Tenaya Canyon, nicknamed the "Tenaya Zig-zags", on foot or by horseback. Once the tours reached the rim, the snow pack was usually substantial enough that they could ski the remaining distance into the ski hut. Concessionaire packers devised clever carrying systems that could accommodate skis, so that equipment could be carried for the guests by pack horses.

The project, in theory, was supported by Yosemite's Superintendent; however, all funding, labor, and materials were provided by YP&CC. Architectural plans were developed by Eldridge T. Spencer of San Francisco under the direct guidance of Tresidder. Spencer had developed a close professional and personal relationship with Tresidder and his wife and worked extensively in Yosemite National Park for multiple decades. For the design of Snow Creek Ski Hut, Tresidder was inspired by his travels to the European Alps and architectural styles found there. The resulting building form is Swiss Chalet style. Further explanation of the Snow Creek Ski Hut's architectural significance can be found below in the subsequent section.

Spencer began drawing plans for the Snow Creek Ski Hut in early September of 1929 and by late fall the building was completed. The overall cost for the project was between \$2,500 and \$3,000. The building and nearby well were constructed by YP&CC staff – Bill Kat, Dick Michaelis (future cook and caretaker of the ski hut), and Jules Fritsch. The final design plan was a one and one half story log frame cabin, square in plan, with a storage pantry extending from the west façade. Proposed plans had called for a below grade food "vault"; however the site could not accommodate this because of the shallow soil and solid granite below. The pantry extension was weatherized by adding an interior layer of sheet metal and jute chinking. The main portion of the building was clad in sugar pine shakes, while the pantry was finished with vertical logs. The window sashes and shutters were painted in a decorative herringbone pattern to accent the natural finishes of the building. The ski hut was capped by a moderately pitched gable roof complete with over-hanging eaves and exposed log rafter tails. A shallow foundation wall wrapped the perimeter of the building and was constructed of local granite rubble. The only entry door to the ski hut was placed along the east façade. The interior living space consisted of a large multi-purpose room, kitchen, and three bedrooms. Interior walls were finished with wallboard and battens. The kitchen contained built-in cabinets, wood burning cook stove, and a basin sink. The building was roughed in for plumbing at the time of construction, but running water was never installed. The kitchen sink drained into a shallow sump adjacent to the building's exterior southwest corner. In Mary Curry Tresidder's memoir, the "Story of the Snow Creek Lodge", she recalls the interior make-up of the building:

*"It had a kitchen with a wood burning stove and metal-lined hidey-hole to keep supplies safe from the bears (vain hope!), a narrow passage with two bunk-beds, and a larger room with a table and six more bunks. A steep, narrow stairway led to the loft, which was divided into two rooms with cots for six to eight people."*

The building was intended to accommodate twelve guests, a cook, and ski instructor. After the initial occupational use of the ski hut during the 1929-1930 winter, it was evident that additional storage space was needed.

Workers constructed an eastern extension the following summer, in 1930. The extension flanked the east façade of the building and extended the existing roofline. The building then exhibited a saltbox form. The extension served as an enclosed mud room, with a granite fieldstone floor, and featured a finished privy closet at its north end. The main entry to the building was now located on the south façade near the southeast corner of the building. Three vertical logs were placed on either side of the entry to shelter the door from blowing snow drifts. During the 1930 construction, workers also added a window within each of the gable ends to provide natural light for the upstairs loft.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut was the initial stop for guided ski-touring expeditions. Trips ranged in length from two days to the "Grand Tour" six day excursion. The Grand Tour provided adventurous guests with a trip from Yosemite Valley to Tuolumne Meadows and back down the Merced River Canyon. This six day excursion could be purchased for \$65 per person and included a cook and guide. Guided trips, including the Grand Tour, and ski instruction were provided by Swiss-born, expert ski mountaineer Jules Fritsch. Multi-day touring routes included expeditions to Tioga Pass, Ragged Peak, Vogelsang Pass, Mammoth Peak, and Lyell Fork. Along these routes, guests and YP&CC staff would stay at the National Park Service Tenaya Lake Ranger Station and Tuolumne Meadows Ranger Stations. These outposts were stocked with food and supplies during the fall months while they could still be accessed by the Tioga Road. Notable expeditions initiating from Snow Creek Ski Hut included the first recorded winter ascent of Mt. Hoffman, Tenaya Peak, and Mt. Dana.

The ski hut accommodated fifty-six guests over the course of the first winter and continued to serve four consecutive winters following that. The guest register documented visitors from all across California to the eastern seaboard, as well as, international visitors from South America, Switzerland, and Austria. World renowned photographer, Ansel Adams, made several trips to the ski hut as a hired employee of YP&CC to capture the beauty of Yosemite's high country in the winter. Aside from only the ski instructor, Mary Curry Tresidder of YP&CC was perhaps the most frequent guest. She was known to spend a hundred plus days in the Yosemite wilderness during the winter months and she affectionately wrote of her experiences at the ski hut.

Although Donald Tresidder had grand plans of promoting ski-touring throughout the Yosemite highcountry, his venture during the 1930s never gained the sustainable amount of appeal it needed and proved unprofitable. In an account by Mary Curry Tresidder, she states "people at that time did not know enough either about skiing or ski-mountaineering to make that dream workable and by the time they knew more about skiing the lift type of the sport had pushed ski-touring far to the rear." The great economic crisis of the 1930s, undoubtedly, did not help matters either.

The Wawona Tunnel opened in 1933 and facilitated safer travel to established downhill ski areas within the park, at Chinquapin and near Monroe Meadows off Glacier Point Road. The National Park Service had begun winter road clearing from the valley floor, past these ski areas, to the southern entrance of the park. Accessibility by automobile made the downhill areas much more desirable to the average park visitor than lengthy excursions into the Yosemite backcountry. In 1934, Badger Pass Ski Resort was opened off of the Glacier Point Road and offered lifts with packed-slope skiing. From its very beginning, Badger Pass proved to be much more successful from a business revenue perspective in relation to the attempt to promote ski-touring. The Snow Creek Ski Hut ceased commercial operations that very same year and the YP&CC shifted the Yosemite Winter Club's attention to developing the downhill ski areas of the park.

Even though the commercial operation at the Snow Creek Ski Hut was short lived the building influenced the architectural style of other ski recreation facilities in California and paved the way for ski-touring in the Sierra Nevada. Spencer, the architect of the ski hut, was hired to design the Lodge at Badger Pass constructed in 1935. Drawing on the inspiration obtained during the design process of the Snow Creek Ski Hut, Spencer incorporated elements of the Swiss Chalet architectural style. The ski hut also influenced other similar ventures, such as the Sierra Club's backcountry ski hut system in Northern California. Prior to 1934, Sierra Club members often slept in railway stations and barns during winter outings. A project to construct small outlying huts near Donner Pass was dedicated in December of 1934. Like the Tresidder's, the Sierra Club deemed that backcountry huts and cabins were essential "to render accessible" the Sierra Nevada in winter. Tresidder shared many of his visions and ideas regarding ski huts with Sierra Club's vice president (1931-1933), Francis Farquhar, through correspondence.

Following the period of significance, the Snow Creek Ski Hut saw sporadic periods of use; however, given its remote location and close proximity to Yosemite Valley the building's function remained constant as accommodations for backcountry travelers. By 1939, YP&CC had no intention of utilizing the ski hut and allowed National Park Service personnel to begin occupying the building during snow surveys trips between Gin Flat and Tioga Pass. This usage continued until 1947, when the National Park Service erected a shelter cabin at Snow Flat to be used specifically for purposes of snow survey. From this point in history, the ski hut sat in a state of deferred maintenance and abandonment for over a decade. Revived interest in backcountry ski-touring did occur in 1940 with the construction of Ostrander Ski Hut. However, the reopening of Snow Creek Ski Hut was not considered for this venture because the concessionaire and National Park Service wished to have overnight accommodations in close proximity to Badger Pass Ski Resort. The Ostrander Ski Hut proved to be a successful venture and continues to be utilized today as Yosemite National Park's only commercially operating ski hut.

In the mid-1960s, a few National Park Service employees "rediscover" the Snow Creek Ski Hut after years of neglect. They had stumbled across old YP&CC brochures for the ski hut and searched the vicinity near Mt. Watkins. The rediscovery did not, however, bring a significant amount of attention to the resource and continued to be unused until 1970 or 1971. It is rumored that squatters inhabited the ski hut around this time and the park was forced to staff the building with volunteer rangers to discourage such activities. In the late 1970s, a Wilderness Expansion Proposal and Backcountry Management Plan (1989) were being developed by Yosemite National Park personnel. Due to evaluations of the building during this period, the Snow Creek Ski Hut gained recognition for its significance to Yosemite's history and began being managed as a historic resource for the park. The evaluations of the building in the 1970s found the ski hut to be in very poor condition and in threat of collapse. Photographic documentation, taken in 1984, shows that vertical log supports had to be positioned under the exposed rafter tails for added support from the heavy snow loads. Although there are documents of condition assessments on the Snow Creek Ski Hut, there are no formal reports of significant repairs done to the building between the late 1970s and 2004. In 1996, a wilderness ranger reported the cabin still to be in a near collapse state and in 2003 the building was temporarily closed for the winter due to "health and safety issues".

In 2004 and 2006 the Snow Creek Ski Hut and nearby well underwent extensive restoration efforts by the Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew to repair sustained deterioration. The work included structural repairs, extensive rodent proofing, and adding insulation to the building. All exterior repairs were made using in-kind materials to preserve the integrity of the building. Restoration efforts were made possible by a grant donated by a

local group. Secondary structures in the vicinity of the ski hut, a metal outhouse and dilapidated remains of a log shed with shingled siding, were not repaired because they were haphazardly constructed outside of the period of significance and neither substantially adds to the significance of the property.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut continues to serve its historic function as backcountry accommodations during summer and winter months with limited public access. It has become a beloved and valued historic resource for not only the National Park Service but for the visitors who stay at the ski hut during winter trans-Sierra skiing expeditions. It is a remaining example of the Swiss Chalet architectural style in concessionaire lodging and embodies a significant chapter in the evolution of winter sports in Yosemite.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut was first recognized for its historical significance during a historic resource case study conducted by Yosemite National Park in 1979. National Park Service Historian, Linda Green, recommended the property, among other significant cultural and historic resources throughout the park, to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in her 1987 multi-volume historic resource study, Yosemite: the Park and its Resources. A Draft Multiple Property Document (MPD) was composed in 2004 by the University of Las Vegas History Department. The Draft MPD used historic contexts from Greene's resource study and recognized twenty buildings, which included Snow Creek Ski Hut, for listing in the National Register. The Draft MPD has yet to be finalized by Yosemite National Park staff; however, it has received concurrence from the California State Historic Preservation Office. (See *Continuation Sheet IV*) The Snow Creek Ski Hut has been identified for its historic significance and is said to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A. The current nomination expands the significance to encompass Criteria A and C, as well as adding the well as a significant contributing resource.

### ***Architectural Significance***

The architectural classification of the Snow Creek Ski Hut is *Swiss Chalet style*. Throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the style was highly influential in the design of many resort lodges across the country, especially National Park Service concessionaire lodges. Architectural design features common to Swiss and German mountain chalets were often used to convey that the scenic and recreational values of the American landscape were comparable, or often boosted as superior, to those of the European Alps. Additionally, the overall character of the Swiss Chalet style allowed the building to be harmonious with the surrounding landscape, all while exhibiting a robustness that could withstand the harsh mountain environment in which it stood. The style is most distinguishable by its cubic massing, prominent capping gable roof, projecting second stories or balconies, use of natural materials for both structural and decorative elements, and ornamental carvings. The Snow Creek Ski Hut is undoubtedly less grandiose in scale and design compared to some of the other lodges that tended towards a romanticized version of the Swiss Chalet style; such as, the Old Faithful Inn of Yellowstone National Park or the Glacier Point Hotel of Yosemite National Park. Nonetheless, the intentional design and incorporated architectural elements lend the ski hut to be classified as Swiss Chalet.

Donald Tresidder, of Yosemite Park & Curry Company, directly influenced the design of Snow Creek Ski Hut to be reminiscent of other European mountain shelters. Tresidder and his wife Mary Curry were avid skiers and had spent much time in the European Alps. As mentioned previously, these travels inspired the conception of a ski hut system in Yosemite National Park. He drew inspiration from architectural books highlighting the Swiss Chalet

style and worked very closely with architect, Eldridge T. Spencer, during the design process. The design of the Snow Creek Ski Hut in the Swiss Chalet style was meant to entice winter enthusiasts and offer a comparison between Tresidder's beloved Yosemite and the European Alps.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut exemplifies many attributes of the Swiss Chalet style, including: cubic massing, log framing, projecting second story, gable roof with wide over-hanging eaves, use of native wood materials, double-course shake siding, and decorated windows and shutters. Other concessionaire buildings within Yosemite National Park that also incorporated elements of Swiss Chalet style were the Glacier Point Hotel, constructed in 1917 and destroyed by fire in 1969, and the Badger Pass Ski Lodge, also designed by Spencer and constructed in 1935.

*Exterior character defining features include:*

- Predominant use of wood and other natural materials
- Log framing with some exposed structural members, such as notched log rafter tails and peeled log vertical supports at the buildings corners
- Double course shake siding
- Saltbox form with gable roof and wide-overhanging eaves
- Multi-light casement windows with trim painted in a contrasting shade of green
- Highly distinctive, functional wooden shutters with a decorative herringbone pattern in white and green
- Projecting pantry with vertical logs symmetrically placed along the west façade
- Slight projection of the upper half story

*Interior character defining features include:*

- Exposed log floor joists
- Wood fiber wallboards and wooden battens
- Robust frame-and-plank style doors
- Douglas fir tongue and groove floorboards
- Local granite fieldstone entryway
- Wood stoves
- Rough hewn quarter-log staircase
- Modest furniture pieces

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

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*Historic Integrity*

The Snow Creek Ski Hut retains all seven aspects of historic integrity as defined by the National Register of Historic Places' standards: *location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling*.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut and its contributing resource remain in their original *location* on the westerly slope of Mt. Watkins in the backcountry wilderness of Yosemite National Park. The location was selected for its proximity to Yosemite Valley and superb skiing terrain. The ski hut was constructed to serve as winter lodging for the hearty few that ventured into the Sierra Nevada during the winter months and continues to serve in that capacity today. Because of the remote location the *setting* has remained relatively untouched. The building is situated within a distinguishable clearing bordered by a dense subalpine forest. Minor resources - such as a shed, outhouse, fire pit, and bear boxes - have been placed adjacent to the building, but do not significantly detract from the property's overall character. In 1984, lands immediately surrounding the property boundary were designated wilderness. This protection ensures that no new development will occur outside of the property boundary or viewshed.

The Snow Creek Ski Hut was *designed* by Eldridge T. Spencer, of San Francisco, under the direct guidance of Yosemite Park & Curry Company concessionaire president, Donald Tresidder. The two men worked very closely together to develop a design that would harmonize with the surrounding environment while incorporating elements of Swiss Chalet architecture. Tresidder intentionally sought to create a correlation between the Snow Creek Ski Hut and ski huts commonly found in the European Alps. The resulting architectural classification is Swiss Chalet style. The cabin has had very minor alterations since the period of significance and retains the majority of its original *material* including: exterior architectural details and finishes, interior built-in cabinetry, interior finishes, hardware, and storage pantry. The cabin has been preserved intact in part due to its remote setting and also to its continued use by the National Park Service as backcountry lodging for wilderness travelers. Present day maintenance work has been conducted by the Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew, who consciously retain as much historic fabric as possible without jeopardizing the structural integrity of the building. If and when materials need to be replaced, the Yosemite Historic Preservation Crew does so with in-kind materials using historic techniques. Quality *workmanship* is evident in the building's substantial log framing, built to withstand heavy snow loads of the High Sierra Nevada, as well as the architectural detailing. Hand-crafted stairs are constructed of rough-hewn logs and frame-and-plank style doors are characteristic of the Swiss Chalet architectural style. Exterior elements, such as the contrasting accent shutters and projecting upper story, are also reminiscent of the style.

The architectural styling of the Snow Creek Ski Hut *associates* the building with other National Park Service concessionaire facilities of the early 1900s and conveys a *feeling* of vacation lodging. The remote setting provides a sense of seclusion, adventure, and unity with the surrounding landscape. The building's interior is intimate, with relatively small spaces and exhibits an unsophisticated quaintness. Since the building and setting have remained unaltered since the period of significance, visitors have a unique opportunity to experience the ski hut just as Mary Curry Tresidder would have in 1930.

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**Snow Creek Ski Hut**

Name of Property

**Mariposa, CA**

County and State

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data****Acreage of Property**One acre – One and a half acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>11S</u>	<u>277706</u>	<u>4185305</u>	3	<u>11S</u>	<u>277702</u>	<u>4185183</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>11S</u>	<u>277766</u>	<u>4185242</u>	4	<u>11S</u>	<u>277644</u>	<u>4185245</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

All lands adjacent to the Snow Creek Ski Hut property have been designated wilderness lands. Due to the presence of man-made structures found within the property, the immediate vicinity of Snow Creek Ski Hut has been deemed potential wilderness. The precise boundary between wilderness and potential wilderness, however, has not been previously documented by the National Park Service. For purposes of this nomination, a boundary perimeter was agreed upon by Yosemite National Park Cultural Resource Specialists within the Branch of History, Architecture, and Landscapes.

The boundary perimeter encompasses a 200 foot radius from a centralized coordinate, N37° 47.252' W119°31.467' (UTM: Zone 11S 277704 Easting 4185243 Northing), for the Snow Creek Ski Hut.

Northern Boundary: 200' due north of Snow Creek Ski Hut;  
N37°47.285' W 119°31.467' (UTM: 11S 277706 Easting 4185305 Northing)

Eastern Boundary: 200' due east of Snow Creek Ski Hut;  
N37°47.252' W119°31.425' (UTM: 11S 277766 Easting 4185242 Northing)

Southern Boundary: 200' due south of Snow Creek Ski Hut;  
N37°47.219' W119°31.467' (UTM: 11S 277702 Easting 4185183 Northing)

Western Boundary: 200' due west of Snow Creek Ski Hut;  
N37°47.252' W119°31.508' (UTM: 11S 277644 Easting 4185245 Northing)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The location for the Snow Creek Ski Hut and its contributing resource were strategically selected by the Yosemite Park & Curry Company concessionaire to serve as a gateway into the High Sierra Nevada from Yosemite Valley during the winter months. The boundary designation contains all that is significant and contributing to the historic character of the property.

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title **Jennifer Self, Historic Preservationist & Architectural Historian**organization **Yosemite National Park**

date \_\_\_\_\_

**Division of Resources Management and Science****Branch of History, Architecture and Landscapes**street & number **5083 Foresta Road**

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town **El Portal**state **CA**zip code **95318**e-mail **Jennifer\_Self@partner.nps.gov****Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**I. Property Location Map:**

Yosemite Falls Quadrangle, California – Mariposa County, 7.5 Minute Series (topographic), United States Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, 1992.

**II. Reference Map:**

Reference map showing the central region of Yosemite National Park. Includes insert map showing the location of the cabin in relation to its immediate surroundings and boundary designation.

**III. Boundary Designation and Photograph Key:**

Reference map showing the approximate location of each photograph taken. Information pertaining to each individual photograph can be found below in the “Photograph Index” section. Includes insert map showing the location of the cabin in relation to its immediate surroundings and boundary designation.

**IV. Concurrence Letter**

Concurrence letter from the California State Historic Preservation Office dated August 23, 2004. States properties identified within a draft Multiple Property Document for Yosemite National Park, including the “Snow Creek Cabin”, are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

**V. Historic Photographs**

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Snow Creek Ski Hut

City or Vicinity: Yosemite National Park

County: Mariposa State: CA

Photographer: Jennifer Self

Date Photographed: October 2009

Location of original digital files: Yosemite National Park, Division of Resources Management and Science, Branch of History, Architecture and Landscapes. El Portal, CA.

Photo #1 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0001)

Northwest corner, camera facing roughly southeast.

Photo #2 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0002)

Southeast corner, camera facing roughly north.

Photo #3 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0003)

Character defining features of the north façade, camera facing west.

Photo #4 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0004)

Interior door within entryway, camera facing north.

Photo #5 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0005)

Interior living room, camera facing west.

Photo #6 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0006)

Interior rough-hewn log staircase, camera facing north west.

Photo #7 (CA\_Mariposa County\_Snow Creek Ski Hut\_0007)

Water well located north-east of the cabin. Contributing resource to Snow Creek Ski Hut. Camera facing north.

**Property Owner:**

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

name Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park

street & number 5083 Foresta Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town El Portal state CA zip code 95318

**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.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Snow Creek Ski Hut

Name of Property

Mariposa County, CA

County and State

Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   8   Page   25  

**Association with *Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park Multiple Property Submission***

The Snow Creek Ski Hut is associated with the *Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park Multiple Property Submission*. It is representative of the following historic contexts, as defined in Section E of the MPS cover document: State and Federal Administration of Yosemite, 1864-1966, and Tourism, Recreation, and the Preservation Ethic in Yosemite, 1864-1971. It is an example of the following property types, as defined in Section F: Resources Associated with State and Federal Administration of Yosemite (1864-1966), with a subtype of NPS Administration; and Properties Associated with Tourism, Recreation, and the Preservation Ethic, with a subtype of Winter Activities.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Snow Creek Ski Hut

Name of Property

Mariposa County, CA

County and State

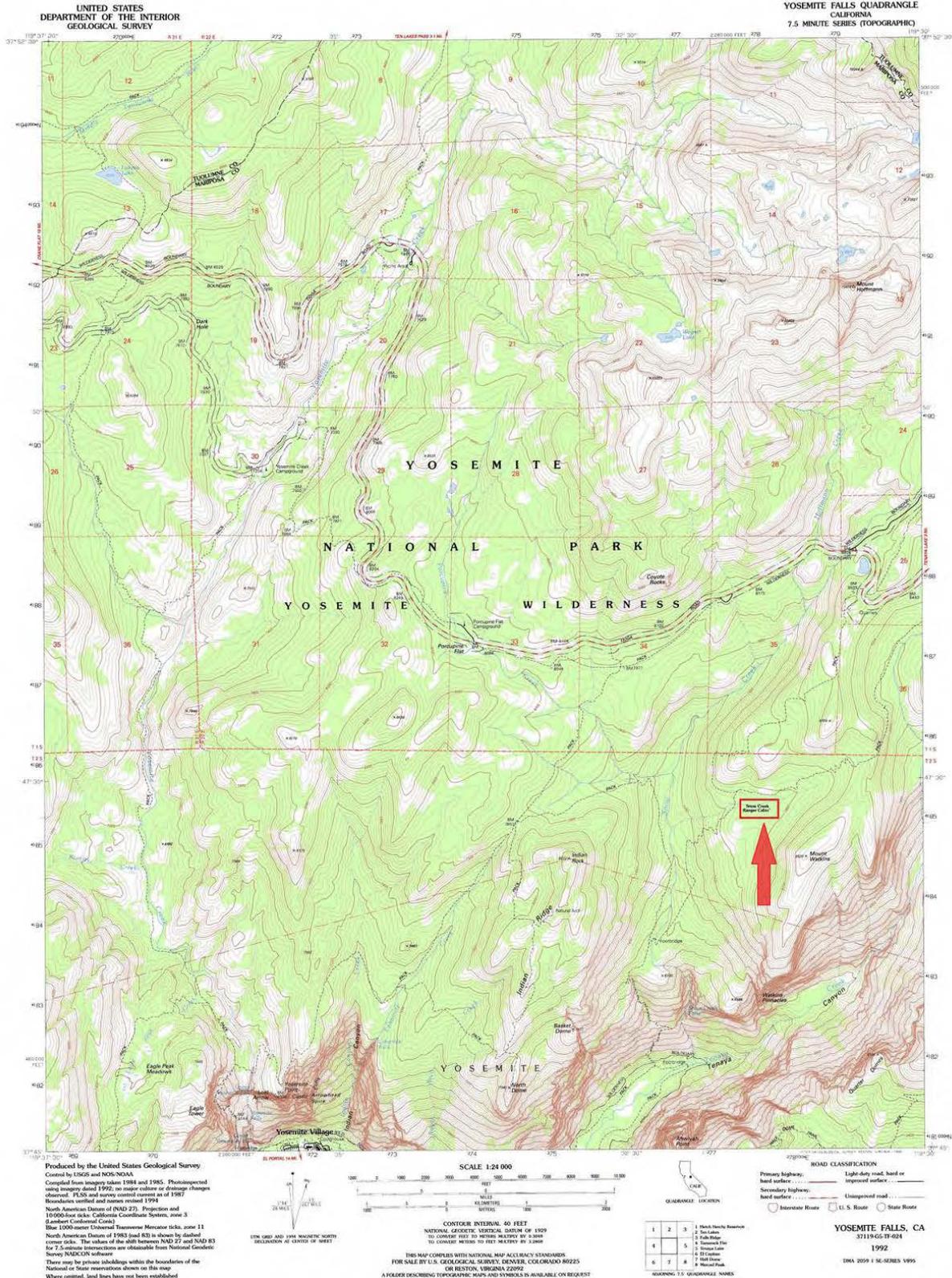
n/a

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page 1

This map has been formatted to fit this page and is NOT TO SCALE.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**Snow Creek Ski Hut**

Name of Property

**Mariposa County, CA**

County and State

n/a

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page II

This map has been formatted to fit this page and is NOT TO SCALE.  
1 inch = approximately 5 miles



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**Snow Creek Ski Hut**

Name of Property

**Tuolumne County, CA**

County and State

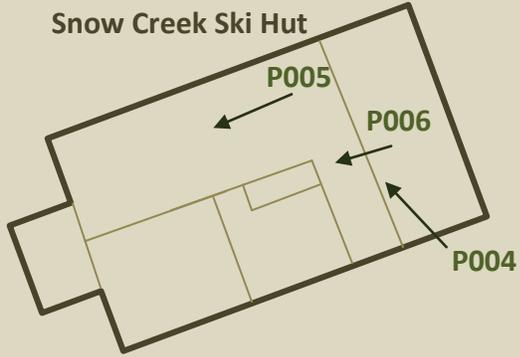
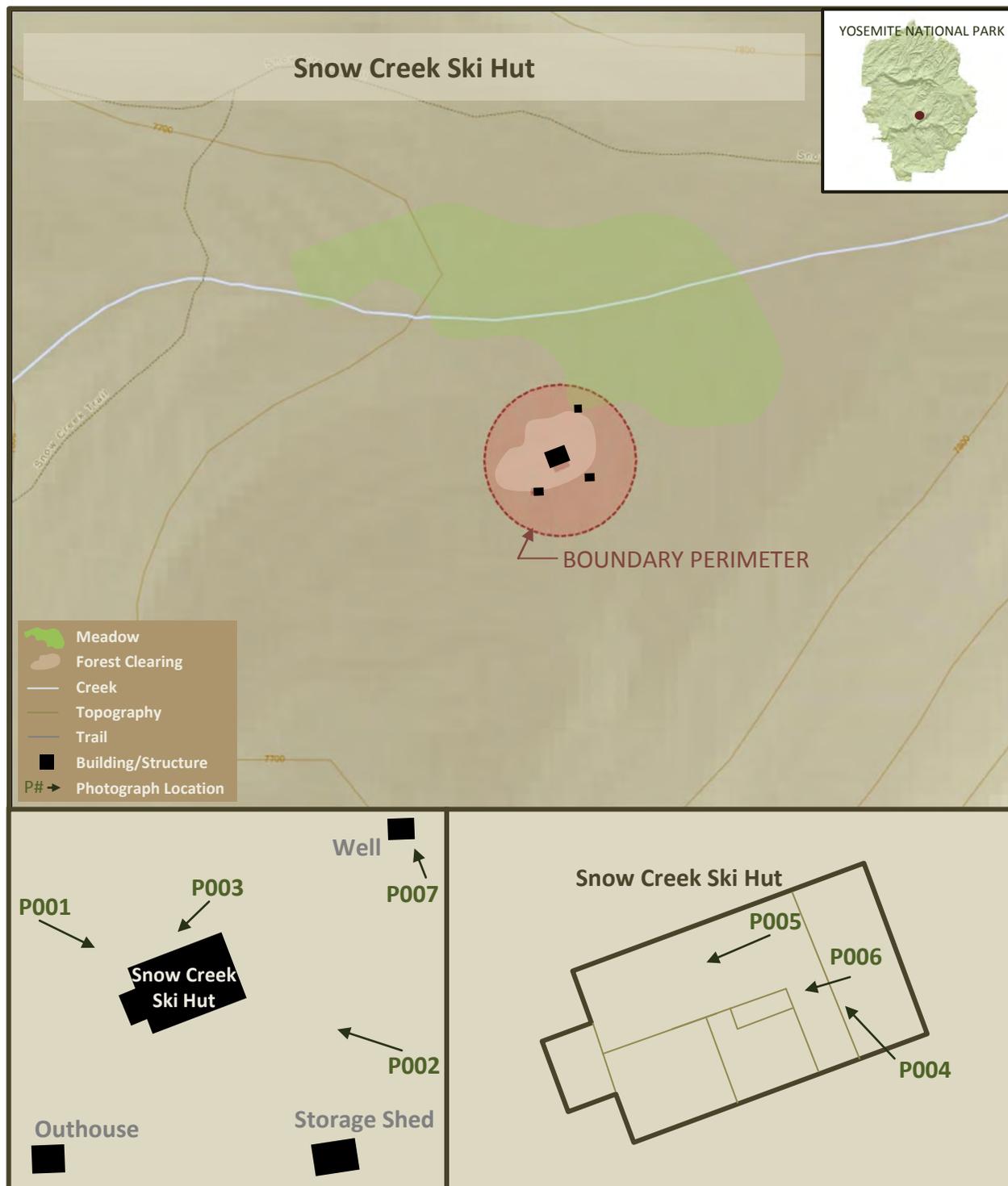
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page III

Map has been formatted to fit this page and is NOT to scale.



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Snow Creek Ski Hut**

Name of Property

**Mariposa County, CA**

County and State

n/a

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page IV

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

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

P O BOX 942896  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94206-0001  
(916) 853-8624 Fax: (916) 853-8824  
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov  
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



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

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

**Snow Creek Ski Hut**

Name of Property

**Mariposa County, CA**

County and State

n/a

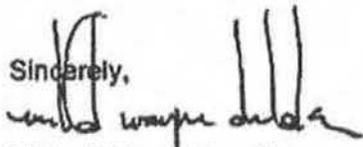
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page IV

**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,



**Milford Wayne Donaldson**  
**State Historic Preservation Officer**

Cc: Kimball Koch

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Snow Creek Ski Hut

Name of Property

Mariposa County, CA

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page V



Historic Photo#1. Skiers at Snow Creek Ski Hut during 1930s. From Yosemite Nature Notes, February 1953. Probably taken between 1930 and 1934. Yosemite National Park Research Library.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Snow Creek Ski Hut

Name of Property

Mariposa County, CA

County and State

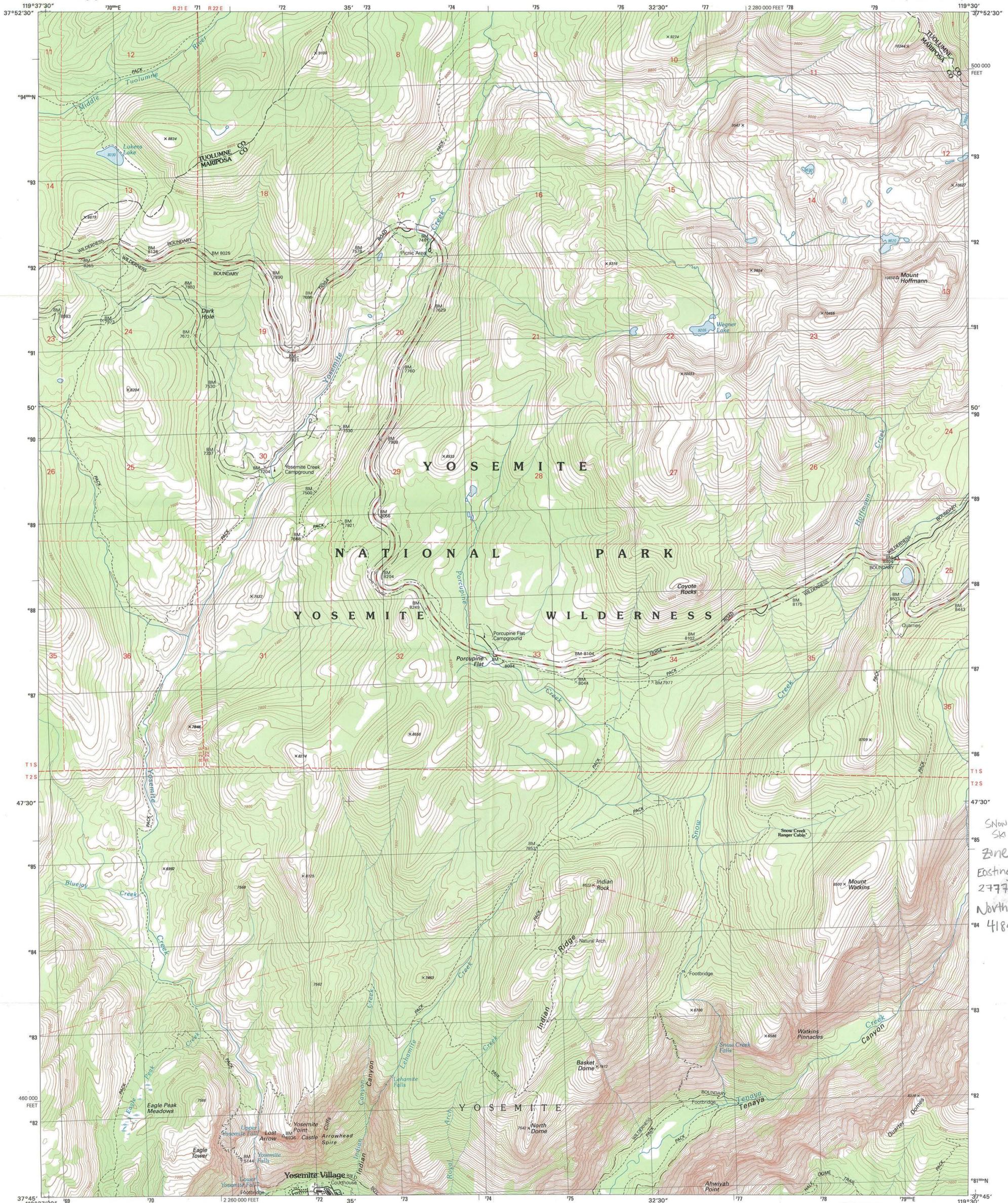
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page V

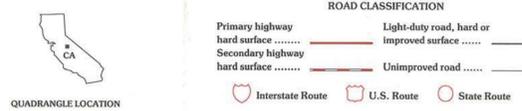
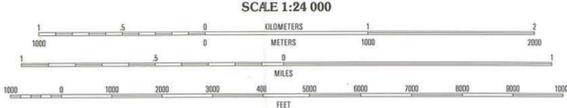
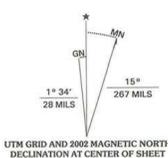


Historic Photo #2. Horseback party at Snow Creek Ski Hut, c. 1934.  
Photographer unknown. Yosemite National Park Archives



SNOW CREEK  
SKI HUT  
Zone: 11S  
Easting:  
277704  
Northing:  
4185243

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Derived from imagery taken 1985 and other sources. Photoinspected  
using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes  
observed. Public Land Survey System and survey control current as of 1987  
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 3)  
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	1 Hatch Herby Reservoir
2	3	4	2 Ten Lakes
3	4	5	3 Falls Ridge
4	5	6	4 Tamarack Flat
5	6	7	5 Tenaya Lake
6	7	8	6 El Capitan
			7 Half Dome
			8 Merced Peak

YOSEMITE FALLS, CA  
1997

NIMA 2059 I SE-SERIES V895

CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
(TO CONVERT ELEVATIONS TO THE NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988, ADD 4 FEET)  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

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

9 780607 9883 14















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Snow Creek Ski Hut  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Yosemite National Park MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Mariposa

DATE RECEIVED: 6/02/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/25/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/10/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/19/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000410

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 Snow Creek Ski Hut is significant under National Register Criteria A and C, in the areas of Architecture and Recreation/Entertainment. Designed and built in 1929 by the Yosemite Park & Curry Company, the modest, log-frame cabin represents a significant local adaptation of the Swiss-Chalet building style. Constructed to serve as winter lodging during guided ski-touring expeditions, the structure signaled a significant new chapter in the evolution of winter sports in Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada mountains. A means of getting Park visitors out beyond the congested Yosemite Valley and into the Sierra high country, the building is considered the first facility built to provide commercially guided ski-touring with overnight backcountry accommodations, a significant precursor to later backcountry development in the Park and Sierra Nevada range. The property meets the registrations requirements set out in the Yosemite MPS.**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept CRITERIA A+C

REVIEWER Paul Lusignea DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 7/18/2014

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.