**1 NAME**

HISTORIC: Moro Rock Stairway

AND/OR COMMON: (same)

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**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER: Giant Forest

CITY, TOWN: Sequoia National Park

STATE: California

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**3 CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
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<td>_WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>_PRIVATE RESIDENCE</td>
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<td>_SITE</td>
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<td>_IN PROCESS</td>
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**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (if applicable)

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER: 450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063

CITY, TOWN: San Francisco

STATE: California

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**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Tulare County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: Mooney and Mineral King Boulevards

CITY, TOWN: Visalia

STATE: California

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**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE: List of Classified Structures

DATE: 1975

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: National Park Service, Western Regional Office

CITY, TOWN: San Francisco

STATE: California
The Moro Rock Stairway is a series of stairs and ramps, totaling 797 feet in length, and leading to the summit of Moro Rock in Sequoia National Park.

Moro Rock is a granitic dome standing on the southern rim of the Giant Forest plateau. It, somewhat, resembles Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, except that it is a whole dome. The summit elevation is 6,715 feet. The eastern, southern, and western faces of the rock are precipitous cliffs over a thousand feet in height. The northern side of the rock is connected to the Giant Forest plateau by a granite ridge. The stairway ascends this ridge.

Beginning at the 6,500 feet elevation level of the rock (survey point 0), below which point the trail is of recent origin, the stairway follows a natural ledge for nearly 100 feet and then steeply ascends a natural crevice to an observation platform (elevation 6,645). The next 75 feet of trail are steep stairs which closely follow the crest of the ridge. Beginning at the 272 feet survey point, the trail leaves the ridge crest and traverses the eastern wall of the rock on a series of ramps supported by masonry retaining walls. Between survey points 460 and 515, the trail, following a natural crevice, cuts back to the crest of the ridge once again. From 515 to 635, the trail ascends along a natural ledge on the west face of the rock. After passing through a rock cut to the east face at 638, the trail, still following natural ledges, switchbacks the final 160 linear feet to the summit.

Throughout its length, the trail makes extensive use of massive masonry walls (see significance statement). The trail surface is mostly concrete with some areas of natural bedrock.

Although the basic trail route has remained unchanged since 1931, numerous alterations have been effected. Generally, these have taken the form of adding metal safety rails above the stone masonry parapets erected in 1931. In some areas, bedrock ramps have been covered over the concrete steps. Those portions of the route that have undergone the most intensive alteration are between the 200 and 275 survey points and between the 515 and 635 points. The best masonry is between the 0 and 150, and 310 and 515.

The survey points quoted in this form are from the 1932 National Park Service survey of the trail (Map SEQ-4944).
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Moro Rock Stairway, Sequoia National Park, is of local significance in the fields of landscape architecture and engineering. These values of significance result from the sensitive design of the stairway and from the craftsmanship present in its construction.

During the summer of 1931, the National Park Service erected a new stairway to the summit of Moro Rock, a granite monolith standing on the rim of the Giant Forest plateau in Sequoia National Park. Previously, a wooden stairway had been placed on the rock, but by the 1920's, it was dangerously deteriorated. Unlike the old wooden stair, which had ascended straight up the barren northern ridge of the rock, the new stairway of 1931 attempted to blend with the rock. Both route and building materials were chosen by Landscape Architect Merel Sager and Engineer Frank Diehl with the intent of harmonizing with the natural scene to the highest degree possible. These intentions were an expression of the then-current architectural philosophy of the National Park Service, a philosophy usually termed "rustic architecture."

The primary design goal of National Park Service rustic architecture was to harmonize with the natural setting through the avoidance of unnatural building lines or materials. At Moro Rock, these goals were pursued in several specific ways. Whenever possible, the stairway ascended along natural ledges or through natural crevices. In this way, unnecessary disfigurement of the smooth surfaces of the Moro Rock dome were avoided. All retaining walls and safety rails along the trail were built of random coursed, granite rubble masonry. The stone used was the same color as the rock itself. This theme was continued into the coloring of the concrete used in the actual stairs and ramps that composed the trail.

As originally designed and built, the stairway was highly successful in terms of harmonizing with the Moro Rock. It is this feature in particular that gives the stairway significance in the fields of landscape architecture and engineering. In addition, the high quality of rustic masonry work present in the structure earns additional local significance in terms of landscape architecture.

Alterations through the years, mainly in the form of metal rails and additional stairs (in place of ramps), have seriously lowered the levels of significance present. This loss of integrity is documented in the accompanying photographs.

Significant values requiring management protection relate primarily to the protection of the visual appearance of the stairway in terms of rustic design.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.4

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at USGS Benchmark 6715, on the summit of Moro Rock, proceed east 25 feet; thence north 600 feet; thence west 100 feet; thence south 600 feet; thence east 75 feet to point of beginning.

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
William Tweed, Park Technician

ORGANIZATION
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park

STREET & NUMBER
Ash Mountain Headquarters

CITY OR TOWN
Three Rivers

STATE
California

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION
SEP 22 1977

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___National  ___State  ___Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE NOV 10 1977

ATTEST

William Tweed

DATE 12/21/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12/21/78