



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mojave NPres  
Date: 07/16/2009

## Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Colosseum Mine Road-Flood Damage Repairs  
Project ID: 09-moja-031/PEPC 26022

### Project Description:

Mojave National Preserve is receiving funding to repair flood damage to the Colosseum Mine road. The park sustained flood damage on February 7th and 8th, 2009 when heavy rains in the Clark Mountain area of the Preserve flooded the major access road to this area from the east side. This event severely washed out approximately two miles of surface and road shoulder features along the Colosseum mine road, a park maintained road. An additional four miles of road farther downslope was also moderately damaged. Deep ruts have been cut into the road and several shoulder sections have been eroded away making the road extremely difficult to safely pass even with four-wheel-drive, high clearance vehicles.

This area of the Preserve is a popular destination for campers, hunters and hikers from the nearby Las Vegas/Henderson areas. Without repairs, even more extensive damage is expected from future flooding, which could result in severe losses along this cut and fill road along a steep hillside.

Approximately two miles of steep grade will require extensive repairs. Within these two miles, the surface will be graded and numerous side drains will be installed along with water bars to help direct the storm water off the road surface. Two existing culverts will be opened up. Approximately 4.7 miles of dirt road across BLM land will require minimal grading to allow the contractor to access the site with his equipment and for trucks hauling aggregate. This 4.7 mile section of road extends from the end of pavement at Yates Well road to the bottom of the steep grade. There will not be any cut-outs installed or the road widened.

Approximately 100 truckloads of crushed aggregate will be hauled from I-15 to the worksite and used as a road base. Soil-Sement will be mixed in with the road base to create a hard packed surface and then graded smooth. Larger boulders and rock material will be used from a tailing pile (11533.84, 3533.904) to stabilize up to four washed out sections of the road on the downhill side. This will prevent future erosion of the shoulder and road surface. The tailing piles are on NPS property and are out of sight from the general public that pass through. Two 42" culverts will be installed in the wash at the bottom of the steep hill.

Water to control dust and for compaction will be taken from the mine pit. A water pump will be set up at the bottom of the pit road. One, 1,000 gallon water truck will transport the water from the base of the pit to the construction site. Permission has been given to cross private property from Barrick Gold of North America with the condition that a Liability Waiver has been signed and approved prior to start of work. The contractor will be responsible for signing of the Waiver. Equipment to be used includes road grader, dump truck, bottom dump truck, excavator, water truck, and backhoe. The project is expected to take six to eight weeks to complete. A tortoise survey will be performed if required.

### Project Locations:

Location

County: San Bernardino  
District: Clark Mountain  
Geo. Marker:

State: CA  
Section: Colosseum Mine road  
Other:

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Mitigation(s):

- Contractor must submit a safety plan that includes precautions for communications, safety, and medical contingencies. The project leader should consult with the chief ranger regarding the adequacy of a safety plan. The project leader must approve the safety plan before construction begins.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** Contractor and their work crew must complete desert tortoise training prior to the start of construction. Training will include desert tortoise identification, tortoise sign identification, and desert tortoise protective measures as defined in the biological opinion for Mojave National Preserve's General Management Plan.
- **Desert Tortoise/Grading on BLM:** To avoid building up of tall berms that may inhibit movement of desert tortoises, the equipment operator should minimize lowering of the road bed while grading. Berms higher than 12 inches or at a slope greater than 30 degrees should be pulled back into the road bed.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction on BLM:** The project site should be surveyed to locate and remove desert tortoises prior to the start of the project. The survey should be conducted by an authorized biologist within 24 hours of the onset of surface disturbance (grading and other road repairs). The biologist should be authorized by the US Fish & Wildlife Service to survey and handle tortoises for this project.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction on BLM:** Staging area(s) should be identified in advance of the project, and surveyed for desert tortoise sign before the project begins.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction on BLM:** Operators of heavy equipment (e.g., road graders) should be accompanied by a qualified biologist when working in desert tortoise habitat during desert tortoise active periods (March 1 to October 31). The qualified biologist should walk in front of the equipment during its operation, and shall function as the field contact representative. S/he has the responsibility and authority to halt all project activity should danger to a desert tortoise arise. Work may proceed only after all hazards to the desert tortoise are removed, the desert tortoise is no longer at risk, or the desert tortoise has been moved from harm's way by a biologist authorized by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. During desert tortoise inactive periods (November 1 through February 28/29), an onsite monitor is not required but the equipment operator shall be a qualified biologist. Otherwise, the operator should be accompanied by a qualified biologist.

Describe the category used to exclude action from further NEPA analysis and indicate the number of the category (see Section 3-4 of DO-12):

**C.9 Repair, resurfacing, striping, installation of traffic control devices, repair/replacement of guardrails, etc., on existing roads.**

Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed work. The contractor and their work crew must receive desert tortoise training prior to start of construction. The contractor must provide a safety plan to meet the mitigation regarding on-site safety. This plan must be approved by Mojave National Preserve before construction can start.

Permission has been received from the Bureau of Land Management, Needles Field Office to grade a portion of the Colosseum Mine Road on BLM lands. The BLM is requiring that the National Park Service monitor for desert tortoise in this area, regardless of the fact that the location in question is not desert tortoise critical habitat. The mitigations above regarding construction in desert tortoise habitat are derived from the Biological Opinion for Mojave National Preserve's General Management Plan. They are required on NPS lands in Mojave National Preserve; they should be applied to BLM lands with consideration of BLM's requirements for desert tortoise preservation and recovery. It is advisable that the tortoise monitor consult with BLM-Needles regarding the BLM's desert tortoise monitoring requirements.

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If these mitigations are met, the potential for significant adverse impacts to the natural and cultural resources of Mojave National Preserve will be negligible. Impairment will not result from the implementation of the proposed work. The National Park Service may carry forward with repairs to the Colosseum Mine Road in Mojave National Preserve.

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No exceptional circumstances (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

Park Superintendent / Date: *Dennis Schramm acting*  
DENNIS SCHRAMM

NPS Contact Person: *Danette Woo*  
DANETTE WOO

Title: Environmental Compliance Specialist

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