



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mojave NPRES
Date: 07/21/2009

Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: ARRA: Kelso Dunes Road-Preventive Maintenance
Project ID: 09-moja-043/PEPC26857

Project Description: Mojave National Preserve is receiving funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to complete preventive maintenance on Kelso Dunes Road. This project is a combination of two PMIS projects: Perform Preventative Maintenance On Kelso Dunes Road (PMIS 102612B), and Spray Dust Palliative On Kelso Dunes Road (86691B). The work consists of grading 3.5 miles of road from Kelbaker road to the parking area (trailhead), then applying 3/4 minus aggregate 3" deep on the 20' wide road surface. 'Soil-Sement' will then be blended into the road base at a rate of 1 gallon per 25 square feet. The road base will then be rolled and compacted smooth with the use of a vibrating roller. Once compacted, 'Soil-Sement' will be then be surface applied to the 3.5 miles of road 20' wide at a rate of 1 gallon per 83 square feet.

Project Locations:

Location

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
District:	Kelso Dunes	Section:	Kelso Dunes Road
Geo. Marker:		Other:	

Mitigations:

- Kelso Dunes road will be closed during the application of dust palliative. The project leader, Steve Carlson, must provide dates of closure to the park's chief of interpretation, Linda Slater, so that the public may be informed.
- Based on previous experience with dust palliatives, no vehicles should be allowed to pass on Kelso Dunes road before the dust palliative has completed cured.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** The project site must be surveyed to locate and remove desert tortoises prior the start of the project. The survey shall be conducted by an authorized biologist within 24 hours of the onset of surface disturbance (grading and other road repairs). The biologist must be authorized by the US Fish & Wildlife Service to survey and handle tortoises for this project.
- **Desert Tortoise:** A biological monitor must walk in front of the vehicle to check for desert tortoise sign. The monitor can halt work immediately if DT sign is observed. Work can be restarted only after the monitor has given clearance for the area.
- **Desert Tortoise:** Check under vehicles before operating.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** Staging area(s) must be identified in advance of the project, and surveyed for desert tortoise sign before the project begins.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** Operators of heavy equipment (e.g., road graders) shall 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 shall 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 shall be accompanied by a qualified biologist.

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Mitigations (continued):

- **Desert Tortoise/Grading:** 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 shall be pulled back into the road bed.
- **Desert Tortoise/Construction:** Equipment operator(s) shall watch for desert tortoise on the road whenever driving, transporting or operating equipment. Driving speeds shall not exceed 20 miles per hour and operating speeds shall not exceed five (5) miles per hour, to allow for adequate visibility.
- **Construction:** All waste will be disposed of in containers provided by the permittee and removed from the worksite each day. The permittee is responsible for insuring that the site is completely trash- and spill-free each day and at the completion of the work.
- **Construction:** All temporary signage, traffic barricades and other equipment will be removed from Mojave National Preserve upon completion of the project.

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 action. Reviewers were generally supportive of the project and made note that dust palliative applications, road grading, and aggregate applications have been done at Kelso Dunes road in the past. The mitigations listed above address concerns regarding road closures and public information, visitor safety, and desert tortoise protective measures. The National Park Service will need to ensure that a desert tortoise monitor is on site during construction, that a pre-construction survey is completed, and that all other conditions as defined in the biological opinion for Mojave National Preserve's General Management Plan are adhered to. No other significant adverse impacts were identified during the environmental review. Impairment to the natural and cultural resources of Mojave National Preserve is not expected to result from the proposed activities.

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/ Lawrence J. Whalen 7/23/09

NPS Contact Person: DANETTE WOO/ Danette Woo

Title: Environmental Compliance Specialist

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