



## Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Film permit-Whale Studio Productions, Kami Norton  
Project Number: 09-moja-048/PEPC 27265

Project Description: Kami Norton (Whale Studio Productions) has applied for a commercial filming permit to hold a film shoot at Zzyzx/Desert Studies Center August 14-18, 2009. This is a feature film. Norton and her supervisor, Ken Schwenker, have requested permission to film on Zzyzx road, around the buildings at the Desert Studies Center (exterior shots only), and along the T&T railroad. Filming at the Desert Studies Center will be to the west of Lake Tuendae among the palm trees that precede Soda Dry Lake, and near the swimming pool. Filming on the T&T railroad will be confined to the road corridor south of the Desert Studies Center and east of the wilderness boundary. The facilities will be used as a backdrop; the filmmakers do not plan to build any temporary structures or alter existing structures. The crew can set up a staging area at a cleared area south of the Zzyzx solar array, west of the T&T road corridor.

### Project Locations:

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
Location 1			
District:	Zzyzx Road	Section:	
Location 2			
District:	Zzyzx/Desert Studies Center	Section:	
Location 3			
District:	Zzyzx/T&T Railroad Corridor	Section:	

### Mitigation(s):

- Only street-legal motorized vehicles may be operated in Mojave National Preserve at any time. All vehicles must remain on existing roads at all times and are prohibited from driving off road anywhere in Mojave National Preserve.
- Wilderness: No mechanized or motorized equipment may be operated in designated wilderness.
- This film shoot may be permitted only with a strong presence of NPS monitors on site. Monitoring costs and a performance bond should be required as stipulations of the permit. The bond and monitoring costs must be paid in advance of the film shoot beginning.

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):

**D.4 Issuance of permits for demonstrations, gathering, ceremonies, concerts, arts and crafts shows, etc., entailing only short-term or readily mitigable environmental disturbance.**

Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed film shoot at Zzyzx. Zzyzx is has been nominated for inclusion on the National Register from Historic Places and is a cultural landscape. California State University, Fullerton operates the Desert Studies Center and uses the buildings for college groups. The endangered Mohave tui chub (*Siphateles mohavensis bicolor*) resides in MC Spring and Lake Tuendae. Soda Dry Lake and the Mojave River Wash are designated wilderness.

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There is a general concern among park staff about allowing filming at this location. Mojave National Preserve will need to monitor the film shoot closely to avoid some of the problems experienced with previous film shoots at Zzyzx. The permittee will be required to post a performance bond. Wilderness boundaries must be strictly observed, especially during filming along the old Tidewater & Tonopah Railroad. The film crew may establish a staging area at an established clearing directly south of the solar array site and west of Zzyzx road. Additional parking for personal vehicles is available at the visitor parking lot west of Lake Tuendae. No filming is allowed inside the buildings. The buildings and landscape may not be altered in any fashion. All requests for use of the area must be approved by the on-site NPS monitor. Filming will only be allowed while an NPS monitor is onsite.

Diligent monitoring is the best available tool for protecting the cultural and natural resources of Zzyzx and Mojave National Preserve. The Visitor Services Division will oversee all monitoring for the shoot to ensure that the natural and cultural resources of Mojave National Preserve are not significantly adversely impacted. In this manner, impairment will be avoided. A commercial filming/photography permit may be issued to Kami Norton of Whale Studio Productions with the above mitigations plus all other standard stipulations associated with film permits.

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 F. White*  
acting 8/6/09

NPS Contact Person:

DANETTE WOO

*Danette Woo*

Title:

Environmental Compliance Specialist

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