



## Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: **Installation of Burro Enclosures at High Priority/Sensitive Springs in Mojave National Preserve**  
Project Number: **10-moja-013/PEPC 27538**

**Project Description:**

The National Park Service has proposed a strategy to repair and update burro enclosures around sensitive and high priority springs in Mojave National Preserve. In this request, burro enclosures would be constructed around two springs on Clark Mountain -- Whiskey spring and Black Bird Mine spring -- neither of which are currently protected. The enclosure at Sacaton spring would be repaired and modified.

Fence enclosures are the first phase in spring restoration. Subsequent actions will depend on the results of the enclosure installations. Variables include:

- Criteria for successful restoration
- Water availability to wildlife
- Education Opportunity
- Scenic Values Cultural Values
- Ecological Values
- Monitoring for effective restoration
- Water Discharge Levels
- Assessment of plant communities pre/past restoration
- Use by wildlife Use by visitors/community
- Values/Benefits of restoration efforts (to the Preserve/Desert Community/Visitors)

Burro enclosures consist of a double-rail fence design using metal pipes. Wire and rebar are not effective with regard to wildlife safety. Black Bird Mine Spring can be accessed from the road that leads to Black Bird Mine, which, in turn, can be accessed via Primm and the power line road. Again the distance from the road is about 500 m. Whiskey Spring can be accessed via the Colosseum Mine Road. The distance from the road is 800 m. The crews required for these endeavors will range from two to ten people and will require between one and three vehicles. Whiskey Spring and Black Bird Mine Spring will require high clearance, 4x4 vehicles.

**Project Location:**

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
Location 1			
District:	Clark Mountain	Section:	Whiskey Spring
Geo. Marker:	633221,3935938 (GIS Point)	Other:	
Location 2			
District:	Clark Mountain	Section:	Black Bird Mine Spring
Geo. Marker:	632648, 3937855 (GIS Point)	Other:	
Location 3			
District:	New York Mountains	Section:	Sacaton Spring
Geo. Marker:	646042,3904557 (GIS Point)	Other:	near Sack Tone Mine

**Mitigation(s):**

- Work at Sacaton spring will be limited to a modification of the existing enclosure, to replace rebar with pipe and to correct the fenceline along an eroded sideslope. Enclosure may not be expanded or extended.
- All work will be carried out solely with hand tools. No mechanized or motorized equipment may be used for this project.
- Park Archaeologist must accompany Project Leader to each site prior to enclosure installation/repair work.

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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.17 Construction of fencing enclosures or boundary fencing posing no effect on wildlife migrations.**

Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed work. Several concerns were expressed during this period.

- Rock Spring is a destination point for visitors. In fact, the Preserve completed a trail to Rock Spring in 2009. Because of its popularity and the need for visitor access, both Rock Spring and Upper Rock Spring were removed from consideration.
- The project leader added three springs to the list late in the review process. Cave spring, Mexican Water spring, and Live Oak spring will need to be considered under a separate environmental review.
- The wildlife biologist visited all sites proposed for burro enclosures and determined intensive burro use at three: Whiskey spring, Black Bird Mine spring, and Sacaton spring. Burro use is inconclusive at the other proposed sites. He proposed to install cameras at some site to photo-document wildlife use. Until there is conclusive evidence linking burros to measurable impacts, the other springs will not be fenced.
- The cattle trespass issue is a recognized problem that the Preserve needs to address with the cattle's owner. It is beyond the scope of this categorical exclusion and must be considered separate from the burro issues of the park.
- For any spring located in wilderness, all work must be done without violating wilderness character.

The mitigations listed above were determined based on these comments. The springs approved for burro enclosure work were narrowed to the three listed in this categorical exclusion. Cameras should be installed at springs where burro impacts are suspected. Significant adverse impacts to Mojave's natural and cultural resources may be avoided or minimized by implementing the above mitigations, restricting work to Whiskey spring, Black Bird Mine spring, and Sacaton spring, and following enclosure design instructions from the park's wildlife biologist, Neal Darby. Under this premise, impairment will not result from the activities approved in this categorical exclusion.

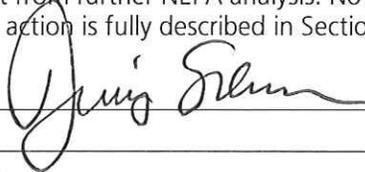
On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No exceptional circumstances or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

**Park Superintendent/**

DENNIS SCHRAMM/

**Date:**

3-22-10



**NPS Contact Person:**

DANETTE WOO/



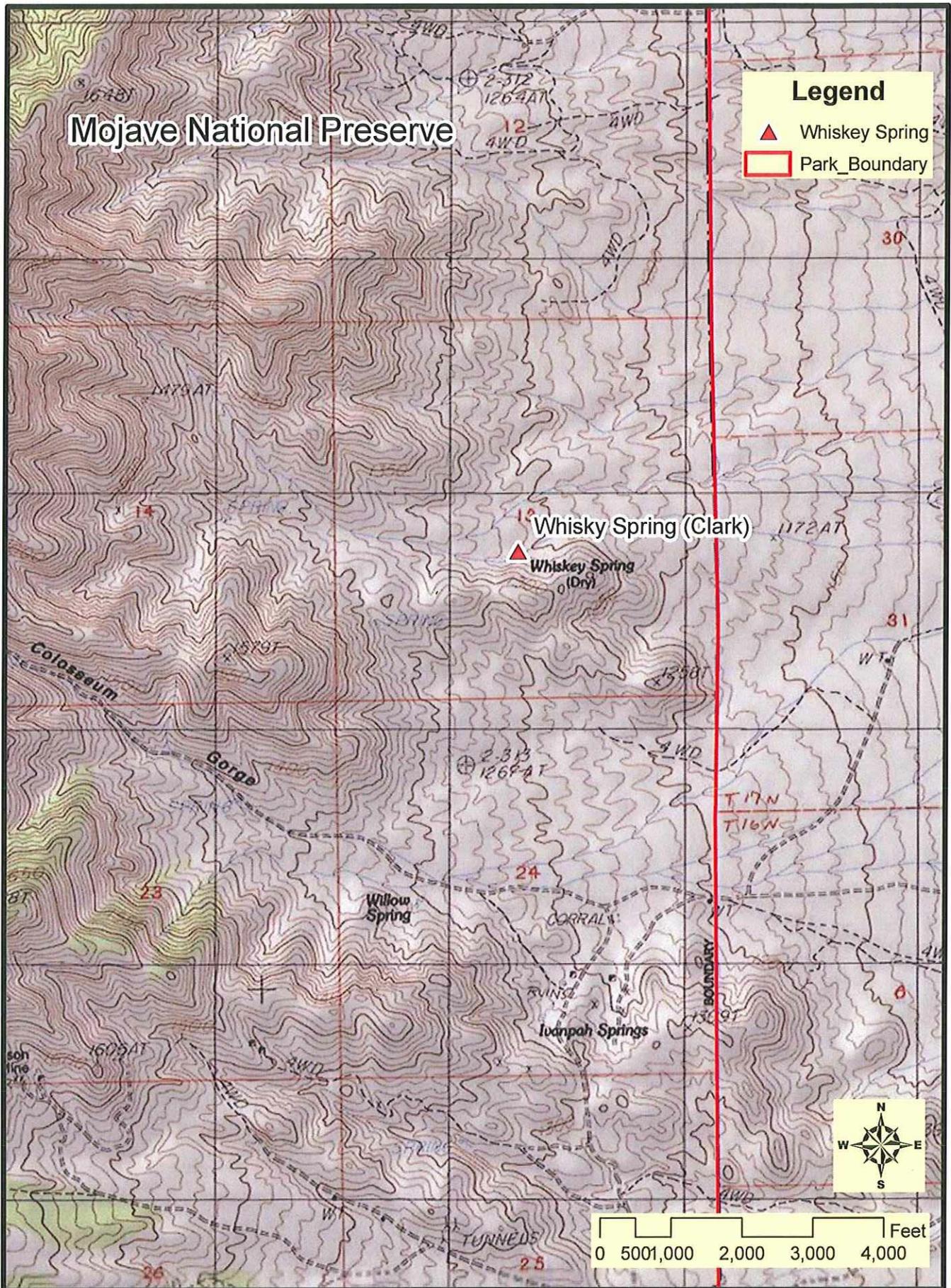
**Title:**

Environmental Compliance Specialist

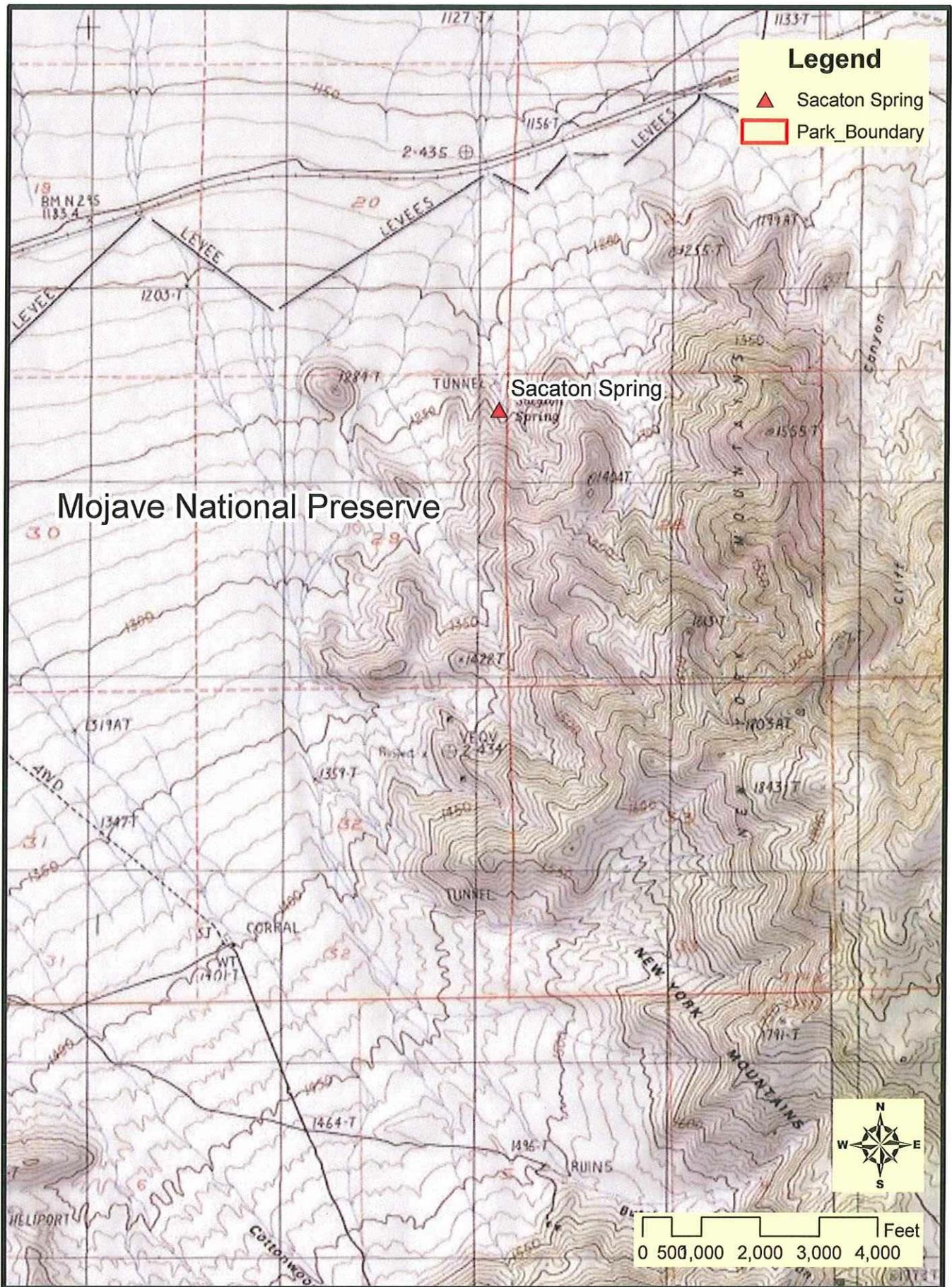
**Telephone number:**

(760) 252-6107

# Whiskey Springs - Clark Mountain



# Sacaton Spring - New York Mountains



# Black Bird Mine Spring - Clark Mountain

