



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: **Chemical Control of Sahara Mustard in MOJA**
Project Number: **10-moja-026/PEPC 30630**

Project Description:

Mojave National Preserve invited the exotic plant management team (EMPT) from Lake Mead National Recreation Area to eradicate pockets of Sahara mustard, a non-native, invasive plant species, within the Preserve. Seedbank longevity in Sahara mustard is decades-long, and, therefore, a recurring need for control based upon actual precipitation is anticipated. Thousands of plants have germinated following the ample rainfall received this year. The invasive plants out-compete the native plants by usurping the moisture needed for later development of the native plants. The need for treatment can range from annual applications to once every several years.

The time-critical nature of weed control made it difficult to predict a project date with much advanced notice. Curt Deuser (LAME EPMT leader) scheduled with his crew to spray Sahara mustard in Mojave National Preserve from March 1-8, 2010. The regional Integrated Pest Management coordinator, Erv Gasser, approved the use of Veteran 720 on Sahara mustard in Mojave National Preserve. The park determined an Emergency Action to allow spraying to take place at a critical time in the plant's development before seeding. This PEPC project initiates an environmental review of the EPMT's activities -- to meet the requirement for NEPA compliance even under an emergency action.

Project Location:

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
Location 1			
District:	Kelbaker Road	Section:	south of Kelso Depot
Location 2			
District:	Kelso Wash	Section:	west of Kelso
Location 3			
District:	Kelso Cima Road	Section:	about 4 mi NE of Kelso

Mitigation(s):

- **Project leader must ensure that the LAME EPMT has radio communications with the Federal Interagency Communications Center (FICC).**
- **The project leader, Annie Kearns, or LAME EPMT -- Contact: Curt Deuser -- must obtain approval from the Pacific West Region's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) coordinator, Erv Gasser, prior to starting chemical applications of sahara mustard within Mojave's boundaries. Proof of regional IPM approval must be provided to Danette Woo, Mojave's environmental compliance specialist, at least one week before any chemical control of sahara mustard begins.**
- **Lake Mead NRA's Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT) must provide a safety plan or risk assessment tool (e.g., Green-Amber-Red, or GAR, plan; or Risk Probability Exposure Model, or SPE plan) to Mojave prior to being allowed to work in the Preserve.**

Project: **Chemical Control of Sahara Mustard in MOJA**
Project Number: **10-moja-026/PEPC 30630**

- **LAME EPMT must give Mojave's housing officer at least two weeks' advanced notice for housing requests, and provide an account number, for use of Mojave National Preserve employee housing. Contact: Lisa M. Wilson, (760) 252-6110 or lisa_m_wilson@nps.gov.**
- **A weed/invasive plant management plan for Mojave National Preserve must be completed and approved before sahara mustard is treated again with chemical pesticides. This action will no longer be allowed under an emergency action after March 2010. The Project Leader, Annie Kearns, needs to work with the acting Chief of Resource Management, Dave Moore, to ensure that a non-native/invasive plant management plan is completed and approved before Spring 2011.**

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):

E.2 Restoration of noncontroversial native species into suitable habitats within their historic range and elimination of exotic species.

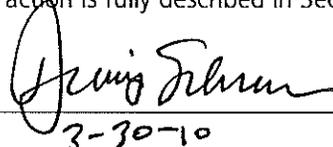
Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the project described in this categorical exclusion. Control of sahara mustard is a recurring issue for Mojave National Preserve. The mitigations listed in this categorical exclusion reflect issues identified during the environmental review period. Reviewers described issues associated with the LAME EPMT providing chemical applications to control sahara mustard in the Preserve. It is to be noted that 2010 is the last year an emergency action with post-project compliance will be taken to allow chemical control of sahara mustard. From this point forward, these mitigation measures should be followed each time chemical applications are used to control non-native and/or invasive plant species.

Chemical control of sahara mustard was found to have greater benefits than adverse impacts to desert tortoise and tortoise habitat. Reviewers did not identify any other potentially significant adverse impacts to the natural or cultural resources of Mojave National Preserve. It is, therefore, concluded that impairment will not result from the use of chemical pesticides to control sahara mustard invasions in Mojave National Preserve, providing the above listed mitigation measures are enforced.

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/

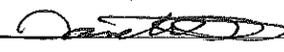


Date:

3-30-10

NPS Contact Person:

DANETTE WOO/



Title:

Environmental Compliance Specialist

Telephone number:

(760) 252-6107