National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mojave NPres
Date: 03/30/2010

Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: **Programmatic NEPA: Recreational Livestock Use in Mojave National Preserve**
Project Number: **10-moja-025/PEPC 30631**

Project Description:
Mojave National Preserve issues special use permits for recreational livestock activities each year. The applicants represent groups of between 60 and 100 riders and horses, plus event organizers and support crews. Since the establishment of Mojave National Preserve, the park has issues permits for livestock use for: (1) equestrian rides of the Mojave Road, (2) equestrian trail rides on Cima Dome marked with removable flagging and clothespins, (3) and livestock use for commercial hunting guides. There has been limited interest in commercial services for trail rides, as well. Past permit holders include: Norco Mountain Posse, ETI Corral, Sunrise Ranch Riders, San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters, and Rainbow Ranch Riders (an incidental business permit). This PEPC project specifically addresses recreational equestrian use that requires a special use permit. Commercial activities of a similar nature Iincluding commercial hunting guides) would need to be addressed in separate compliance, and would be permitted under the commercial use authorization program.

The National Park Service stipulates in its permits that all livestock must be fed only weed-free feed or feed that has been certified by the San Bernardino County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures as being locally grown. Other requirements for equestrian use groups include: a schedule of the planned route(s) with GPS coordinates (UTM, NAD 83 preferred), a safety plan, and requirements for clean-up.

An environmental review of recreational equestrian activities will hopefully result in a programmatic NEPA decision that can be applied to the majority of future special use permit requests of this nature. In addition to the stipulations listed in the above paragraph, the park should consider imposing Leave No Trace restrictions for livestock use in the backcountry. Reviewers are invited to contribute their ideas in order to set a park-wide standard for equestrian group permits.

Project Location:
Location

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
District:	park-wide	Section:	
Geo. Marker:		Other:	

Mitigation(s):
- **Special use permits must include or refer to Leave No Trace principles.**
- **Special use permits must require that the permit holder provide a good communications plan, including the use of emergency relay devices such as SPOT devices, satellite telephones or personal locator devices, in case of emergency. Cellular telephones will not suffice to meet this requirement.**

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.

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Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed action. Reviewers were generally supportive of recreational equestrian activities in the Preserve and support the proposed action. The mitigations described in this categorical exclusion address issues that arose during the environmental review process. As recreational equestrian activities increase in popularity, park staff should consider preparatory meetings with permit applicants to address minimum impact activities and/or produce a handout or guide about Mojave National Preserve. 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 occur as a result of permitting recreational livestock use as described above.

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/ Date:	DENNIS SCHRAMM/ 3-30-10
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