National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mojave NPres
Date: 04/21/2010

Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: **Grazing SUP-Round Valley Allotment**
Project Number: **10-moja-027/PEPC 30656**

Project Description:

Ray Maria, son-in-law of Irene Ausmus, has requested a renewal of Ms. Ausmus's grazing permit for the Round Valley Allotment. This allotmenet has been grazed since 1926. The Bureau of Land Management issued a grazing lease for the Round Valley allotment to Lillian J. Goss and Robert E. Ausmus on March 24, 1976 for the authorized use of 26 cattle animal unit months (AUMs). After the establishment of Mojave National Preserve, the National Park Service issued a special use permit for grazing to Irene Ausmus. This permit, dated August 28, 1995, was valid for five years, and authorized 27 cattle AUMs; it expired October 31, 1999. Ms. Ausmus' son-in-law, Ray Maria, is now requesting that the permit be renewed.

The Round Valley Allotment lies adjacent to and directly due north of the Gold Valley Allotment. It lies across from Mid Hills campground on the eastern side of Black Canyon Road. The Round Valley Allotment Management Plan was written and approved by the Bureau of Land Management in 1985. The Land Status summary at that time is:

1. **Suitability Grazeable Acres = 3,824 Total Acreas = 4,200**
2. **Land Ownership Private = 3,184 Public = 670 Total = 3,854**
3. **Animal Unit Months Private = 177 Public = 30 Total = 207**

Vegetation types include pinyon/juniper (*Pinus edulis/ Juniperus* sp.; 3%), juniper/sagebrush (*Juniperus* sp./ *Artemisia tridentate*; 80%), and grassland/snakeweed (*Gutierrezia* sp.; 17%). Key forage species are *Elymus elymoides* (squirreltail) and *Bouteloua eriopoda* (black grama). The Round Valley grazing allotment plan indicates a current AUM (1985) of 27.

Project Location:
Location

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
District:	Round Valley	Section:	
Geo. Marker:		Other:	

Mitigation(s):

- **Use the Point Reyes National Seashore template for grazing special use permits without facility leasing, to develop the grazing permit for Irene Ausmus and, in future, other grazing permits.**
- **Special Use Permit must include stipulations to limit the introduction and spread of non-native, invasive plants: (1) allow only certified weed-free feed only if supplemental feed is permitted; (2) control local patches of non-native, invasive plants; (3) cattle released from outside the grazing allotment must first be "treated" for potential weed seeds; and (4) provide feed to cattle in containers to control consumption only by cattle and not by non-native animals (e.g., starlings, cowbirds).**
- **The Bob Hollimon homestead parcel, part of National Park Service Lands, must be fenced off from cattle to protect historic, prehistoric, and hydrological resources. The finding of No Historic Properties Affected is contingent upon the construction of fenceline to exclude cattle from the Hollimon Homestead parcel within NPS lands.**

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):

A.3 Reissuance/renewal of permits, rights-of-way or easements not involving new environmental impacts.

Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed permit renewal. The mitigation measures listed in this categorical exclusion address some of the concerns expressed during the review process. In particular, the finding of No Historic Properties Affected is only valid upon the installation of exclosure fencing to exclude cattle from the Hollimon Homestead parcel. The special use permit should follow a template developed by Point Reyes National Seashore, while being tailored to Mojave National Preserve requirements. Stipulations must also control to the extent possible the spread of non-native, invasive plants. The permit will allow the maximum level of grazing that was determined for the NPS portion of the Round Valley allotment as of October 31, 2004, the enactment of the California Desert Protection Act – 27 animal unit months (AUMs). Reviewers did not identify any other potentially significant resource impacts. It is, therefore, concluded, that impairment will not result from continuation of cattle grazing on the Round Valley Allotment in Mojave National Preserve.

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: 4/23/10

NPS Contact Person: DANETTE WOO/

Title: Environmental Compliance Specialist

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