

## ALTERNATIVES

This chapter describes the alternatives considered for the Saline Valley Warm Springs Final Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS). These alternatives present a range of reasonable approaches that addresses the purpose and need for an action. This chapter also includes the elements common to all alternatives; details of the alternatives; and the National Park Service (NPS) preferred alternative; alternatives considered but dismissed; and mitigation measures.

Five alternatives are analyzed for the management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. The alternatives under consideration include a no-action alternative, as prescribed by Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 1502.14. The no-action alternative in this plan/EIS would continue the current management of the area with no changes to the maintenance and use of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as managed by the user groups and the volunteers. Four action alternatives for the management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area were developed based on information gathered during scoping activities conducted with the National Park Service, the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe (the Tribe), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Inyo County, and the public.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the alternatives selected for detailed analysis. Table 1 presents the details of the elements of the alternatives.

#### Elements Common to All Alternatives

The National Park Service is authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Tribe by the Timbisha Shoshone Homeland Act of 2000 (Homeland Act; Public Law 106-423) “for the purpose of providing training on the interpretation, management, protection, and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of the areas designated for special uses by the Tribe.” The National Park Service is directed by the Homeland Act to accommodate access to and use of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area by the Tribe for traditional cultural and religious activities in a manner consistent with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (Title 42 of the United States Code [USC], section 1996 et seq.).

The warm springs of Saline Valley (the warm springs) is identified as a special use area for the Tribe in the *2000 Final Legislative Environmental Impact Statement: Timbisha Shoshone Homeland* and the Homeland Act. The Tribe has a historic relationship with Saline Valley Warm Springs Area; the area has been used by the older generation of contemporary tribal members for healing and medicinal purposes.

Any cooperative agreement for tribal use of the warm springs would agree with the objectives described in this plan/EIS and will comply with applicable state and federal law. Any cooperative agreement would also formally recognize the contributions by the Tribe to the history, culture, and ecology of Death Valley National Park and the surrounding area and could create a richer visitor experience through potential interactions with the Tribe. The National Park Service has engaged in government-to-government consultation with the Tribe regarding a cooperative agreement, separate from this plan/EIS. This consultation process is ongoing and will not be completed before a record of decision is signed for this plan/EIS.

## ALTERNATIVES

Several other elements are common to all alternatives, as they relate to the management of Death Valley National Park (the park), including the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area:

- The Superintendent’s Compendium identifies guidelines for the park and includes regulations specific to the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area.
- Park entrance fees are required for anyone recreating in the park and apply to visitors of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area.
- Visitors are allowed to camp throughout Death Valley National Park for up to 30 days per calendar year; except for Furnace Creek Campground, which has a limit of 14 days per calendar year.
- Off-road driving is prohibited in all areas of the park.
- Visitors to Death Valley National Park are expected to follow Leave No Trace<sup>©</sup> camping practices to avoid human-created impacts in the park.
- With the exception of alternative 4, developments or modifications would be designed using low-impact development practices, which work to maintain a landscape with the minimum impact possible.
- Nonnative vegetation that dies naturally or is physically removed may be replaced with native species to prevent future site occupation by nonnative species.
- The park has a “no burro or wild horse” goal and has entered into a 5-year agreement with the Texas-based nonprofit Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue to capture 2,500 burros from the park and relocate them to offsite adoption facilities and sanctuaries.
- If a natural event, such as a flood, were to damage any feature within the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area, the National Park Service would not repair the damage or replace the feature.

### **Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative**

The no-action alternative (alternative 1) is required by National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), to assess the impacts of the continued management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area without changes to the management strategy by the National Park Service. The no-action alternative, as described in the NPS NEPA handbook, “provides a benchmark for the public and a decision maker to compare what would happen to the environment if current management were continued into the future, as opposed to what would happen to the environment if one of the action alternatives were selected for implementation” (NPS 2015a).

The Death Valley General Management Plan (GMP) (NPS 2002a) deferred specific management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area to a future site-specific management plan (this plan/EIS); however, it did include the follow directives regarding ongoing visitor use at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area:

- Limit soaking tubs/spas to the current level of improvements.
- Protect the Upper Spring area from human improvements and use from feral burros.
- Maintain Saline Valley Road to its current surface condition by Inyo County.

Under the no-action alternative, use of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would continue under the current management with no changes. The users, with help from the volunteer camp hosts, would continue to informally oversee the recreational uses of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. Visitors would continue to be able to use the tubs and associated facilities, including showers, dishwashing

stations, and user-created fire rings. Camping would be dispersed with car camping in backcountry areas. Camping areas would not be designated by the National Park Service. The camp host would be able to assist visitors with vehicle issues due to presence of the vehicle support facility and supplies at Lower Spring. Visitors with small aircraft would continue to be able to land at the Chicken Strip airstrip and camp with their aircraft, special regulation pending. All elements of the no-action alternative are presented in table 1.

Natural and cultural resources would not receive any further protection under the no-action alternative. There would be minimal control of nonnative vegetation through trimming and minor removal efforts by the camp host. Feral burro control would include the existing fencing at Lower Spring and education by the volunteer camp host to prevent feeding of wildlife. Visitors could continue to create new artwork throughout the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area that may disturb archeological and ethnographic resources.

The no-action alternative could result in noncompliance with federal and state regulations for human health and safety due to the recreational use of water without water quality monitoring and unregulated storage and use of hazardous materials, such as bleach and automotive supplies. Due to this noncompliance, the no-action alternative cannot be selected as the preferred alternative.

## **Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative**

The Saline Valley Warm Springs Area has been used for decades for soaking and camping by a number of deeply committed users. The National Park Service developed the regulatory compliance alternative, which retains much of the existing use of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area but brings the actions and conditions into compliance with NPS, state, and federal regulations.

In an effort to protect the health and safety of visitors, the regulatory compliance alternative would require the National Park Service to consult with the NPS Office of Public Health to develop an approach for water quality monitoring, add signs at the sinks to inform visitors of nonpotable water, add filtration systems for discharged water at the dishwashing stations, and make the tubs accessible, to the extent possible, as defined by the 2010 *Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design*. Further actions to protect public health would include fencing the source springs at Lower and Palm Springs to prevent access to water sources by feral burros, fencing the settling pond, and proper storage of hazardous materials. The vehicle support facility would be removed, and emergency vehicle assistance should not be expected by the visiting public; this matches policy throughout the park. Visitors with small aircraft would continue to be able to land at the Chicken Strip airstrip (special regulation pending) and camp with their aircraft.

The National Park Service would work to limit visitor impacts by creating a no-cost permit system for all overnight guests, prohibiting the manipulation of natural or cultural resources for the purpose of art, and removing all non-historic art from wilderness. This would include all artwork with the exception of the lower peace sign.

Alternative 2 would also take steps to improve and restore the natural and cultural environments by controlling nonnative plant species, removing user-created fire rings, requiring visitors to haul out ash and charcoal, encouraging visitors at the campgrounds—but requiring campers at the Chicken Strip—to pack out their waste, encouraging the use of NPS-provided firepans at the campsites, and treating the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as areas of ethnographic and historic significance for the Tribe and recreational users, respectively. Finally, visitor education would increase under alternative 2 to include regulatory, health and safety, and compliance information. All elements of the regulatory compliance alternative are presented in table 1.

### **Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative**

The community engagement alternative aims to involve user groups in the protection of park resources and to ensure compliance with applicable NPS, state, and federal regulations, while providing visitors with the types of experiences they currently value. The user groups would be engaged through agreements to identify and carry out many of the actions needed to protect natural and cultural resources, protect human health and safety, and identify roles and responsibilities for protecting resources and maintaining visitor facilities. The user groups would be engaged in the accomplishment of many of the actions needed to protect human health and park resources through memoranda of understanding (MOUs) that could identify responsibilities for maintenance of facilities, maintenance of the airstrip, and protection of natural and cultural resources.

The community engagement alternative would employ the same measures to protect the health and safety of visitors as alternative 2; however, instead of fencing just the source springs, this alternative would install artistic wooden fencing to enclose the soaking tubs, source springs, and riparian areas at Lower Spring and Palm Spring to prevent access to water sources by feral burros.

Increased resource protection would be incorporated into alternative 3, including additional nonnative vegetation control, the potential use of food storage boxes, a monitoring and response program, and establishment of thresholds for overuse of the resources. This alternative includes restoration measures, such as removing the diversion piping from Burro Spring.

Efforts to limit visitor impacts and improve and restore natural and cultural environments under alternative 3 would be similar to those described for alternative 2. However, camping would be restricted to designated camping areas with designated overflow walk-in camping areas and associated defined parking areas; no camping would be allowed within 200 feet of the source springs. Visitors with small aircraft would continue to be able to land at the Chicken Strip airstrip (special regulation pending) but would not be able to camp with their aircraft. Alternative 3 would expand education to include additional signs on campground boards and engagement by the volunteer camp host, and tribes would be engaged to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge. All elements of the community engagement alternative are presented in table 1.

### **Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative**

The goal of the restoration alternative is to restore the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area, as closely as possible, to natural conditions with minimal or no development. The tubs and associated infrastructure would be removed, as would the dishwashing stations, showers, vehicle support facility, airstrip, the vault toilets, and all artwork. Dispersed camping would continue to be permitted but would be more restrictive, as visitors would be required to camp at least 200 feet from all water sources. Park staff would develop and implement a habitat restoration plan to remove nonnative plants and restore native habitats. The National Park Service and the Tribe would work to restore the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area to its natural and ethnographic landscape. Prior to removal of the tubs and infrastructure, the National Park Service would properly document the proposed Saline Valley Warm Springs Historic Site, including drawings, photographs, and other materials. This alternative would require extensive park law enforcement and resource staff support during implementation for education, enforcement, and restoration activities. All elements of the restoration alternative are presented in table 1.

## **Alternative 5: Preferred Alternative**

In June 2016, the interdisciplinary team met to discuss the alternatives and to recommend a preferred alternative for the management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. The preferred alternative was developed by examining the elements of action alternatives 2, 3, and 4 and creating a new alternative that allowed for continued recreational visitor use, while protecting the natural and cultural resources of the site. The preferred alternative incorporates community engagement in the management of the site through MOUs with interested organized groups. The preferred alternative was further revised by the interdisciplinary team in September 2018 after assessing public comments received during the review period for the draft plan/EIS. Alternative 5, the preferred alternative, is similar to alternative 3, except as explained in the following paragraphs.

Under alternative 5, the National Park Service would not require permits for camping at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. The National Park Service would instead gather data on visitor use patterns through formal visitor use studies, which could include ways to count visitors at both high and low use periods. These data would help the National Park Service understand current visitor use trends and impacts. If overnight camping fees or permits are implemented in the future for developed backcountry campgrounds throughout the park, they would also apply at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area.

Three distinct camping zones would be established: designated dispersed camping (with car camping), overflow walk-in camping with a separate designated parking area, and no camping areas. Visitors would be unable to camp within 100 feet of the source springs. Under alternative 5, visitors with small aircraft would continue to be able to land at the Chicken Strip airstrip (special regulation pending); camping would be allowed at the Chicken Strip airstrip and additional tiedowns could be added. Visitors that camp at the airstrip would be required to pack out their waste, unlike alternative 3.

Managing and protecting natural resources through onsite monitoring while maintaining the historic values of the site is an NPS priority for the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. The lawn at Lower Spring would be allowed to remain but only within its current footprint; expansion would not be allowed. Existing mature palm trees would remain at the site and would only be removed after they die naturally. Young palm trees would be removed, and native species would be planted while the existing mature palm trees are still alive to allow the native trees time to mature and provide shade. Unlike alternative 3, which proposed to install artistic wood fencing to enclose the soaking tubs, the source springs, and the riparian areas, the preferred alternative would install fencing around the source springs only, as described for alternative 2, to prevent feral burro access to water sources. All fencing would be dependent on archeological surveys and additional consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Alternative 5 would also replace the fencing at Upper Spring and would expand the fenced area to incorporate the warm and cold source springs. The preferred alternative would remove non-historic art from wilderness but would allow art to remain in non-wilderness areas. New art would be allowed in the non-wilderness areas, provided that natural and cultural resources are not manipulated, the art is not a permanent fixture, and the art is removed from the site when the visitor creating the art leaves the site. The National Park Service would install a subterranean system for treating wastewater generated at the site. Finally, the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would be made accessible to the extent practical while preserving potential significant historical features. All elements of the preferred alternative are presented in table 1.

TABLE 1. ELEMENTS OF THE ALTERNATIVES

## Notes:

Items identified in this table as NPS-provided, such as fire enclosures, would be distributed as funding allows.

Items in italics in this table are mitigation and/or restoration efforts required under each alternative. Users, volunteers, and park staff could engage in further restoration efforts under NPS management; however, the actions identified in this table are the minimum actions required under each alternative.

The no-action alternative and the regulatory compliance alternative present the minimum required actions for each element of these alternatives; however, visitors, volunteers, and park staff could use the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area in a manner that would be more protective of the natural and cultural resources.

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
<b>Natural Resources</b>					
Nonnative Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal control of nonnative plants (e.g., trimming and hand pulling of young nonnative invasive palms is accomplished by volunteer camp host)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Remove nonnative invasive palms from Upper Spring</i></li> <li><i>As nonnative invasive palm trees die naturally at Lower Spring and Palm Spring, allow the area to naturally revegetate</i></li> <li><i>Nonnative plant control by National Park Service</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Removal of nonnative invasive palms from Upper Spring</i></li> <li><i>As nonnative invasive palm trees die naturally at Lower Spring and Palm Spring, allow the area to naturally revegetate</i></li> <li><i>Nonnative plant control by National Park Service</i></li> <li><i>Remove the lawn and allow the area to naturally revegetate or replant with native vegetation</i></li> <li><i>Engage tribes to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of all nonnative species, including the lawn at Lower Spring</li> <li>Restoration with native species in natural distribution patterns</li> <li>Engage tribes to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Removal of nonnative invasive palms from Upper Spring</i></li> <li><i>Retain existing mature palm trees at Lower Spring and Palm Spring and remove as they die naturally; remove young palm trees and add native species</i></li> <li><i>Nonnative plant control by National Park Service</i></li> <li><i>Retain the lawn in its current footprint; no expansion</i></li> <li><i>Engage tribes to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge</i></li> </ul>

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Feral Burro Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal control (e.g., fencing to exclude feral burros from lawn at Lower Spring)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artistic fencing to surround the source springs at Lower and Palm Springs to prevent access to the water sources by feral burros<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extension of the artistic wooden fencing around the tubs, source springs and riparian areas at Lower and Palm Springs to prevent access to water sources and vegetation by feral burros<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of fencing around the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area at the wilderness boundary to prevent access by feral burros<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of fencing around the source springs to prevent access to water sources by feral burros<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Replace and expand fencing at Upper Spring to incorporate warm and cold source springs<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
Habituated Wildlife and Food Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education to prevent deliberate or inadvertent feeding of wildlife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate food storage would be encouraged through on-site and online outreach to users</li> <li>Camp host(s) would encourage users to keep all food safely and securely stored in vehicles</li> <li>Education (including signage) to prevent deliberate or inadvertent feeding of wildlife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate food storage would be encouraged through on-site and online outreach to users</li> <li>Camp host(s) would encourage users to keep all food safely and securely stored in vehicles or food storage boxes</li> <li>Education (including signage) to prevent deliberate or inadvertent feeding of wildlife</li> <li>Installation of food storage box(es), if necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education to prevent deliberate or inadvertent feeding of wildlife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate food storage would be encouraged through on-site and online outreach to users</li> <li>Camp host(s) would encourage users to keep all food safely and securely stored in vehicles or food storage boxes</li> <li>Education (including signage) to prevent deliberate or inadvertent feeding of wildlife</li> <li>Installation of food storage box(es), if necessary</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> The fencing locations discussed in this table and depicted in figures in this plan/EIS are approximate. Prior to finalizing the location of the fencing, the National Park Service would be required to complete a survey for archeological resources and additional consultation with the SHPO.

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Resource Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with resource stewardship throughout the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with resource stewardship throughout the park</li> <li>MOU with user group for minimal maintenance of tubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOU with user groups that may include activities such as invasive plant removal; monitoring of Upper Spring; campsite management; minimal maintenance of tubs; and protection of archeological resources and wilderness boundaries</li> <li>Establish thresholds on use and overuse of the area</li> <li>Monitoring and response whereby actions would be taken by park management to restrict use of the springs if damage to natural and cultural resources is observed</li> <li><i>Implementation of restoration measures, such as removing the water diversion piping at Burro Spring</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish thresholds on use and overuse of the area</li> <li>Monitoring and response whereby actions would be taken by park management to restrict access to the springs if damage to natural and cultural resources is observed</li> <li>Contract with organizations for specified services related to protection of natural and cultural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOU with user groups for activities that may include, but are not limited to, maintaining the soaking pools, invasive plant maintenance/removal (other than the lawn and existing mature palm trees), monitoring the conditions of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area, visitor education, or other duties that may be identified and agreed upon in the future</li> <li>Manage and protect natural resources through onsite monitoring while maintaining the historic values of the site; response actions taken by park management to restrict use of the springs if damage to natural and cultural resources is observed</li> <li><i>Implementation of restoration measures, such as removing the water diversion piping at Burro Spring</i></li> </ul>

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<b>Recreation</b>					
Camping Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory no-cost permit system modeled after the Visitor Use Permit system (appendix E) proposed in the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory no-cost permit system modeled after the Visitor Use Permit system (appendix E) proposed in the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan</li> <li>A sign-in log would be maintained for campers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory no-cost permit system modeled after the Visitor Use Permit system (appendix E) proposed in the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete formal visitor use surveys to gather data on visitor use patterns and impacts</li> <li>Future changes to permit requirements for developed backcountry campgrounds in the park would apply, consistent with the established framework in the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park entrance fee applies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park entrance fee applies</li> <li>Overnight camping fee could be implemented in the future and would include an independent public process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park entrance fee applies; campground host(s) check compliance</li> <li>Overnight camping fee could be implemented in the future and would include an independent public process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park entrance fee applies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park entrance fee applies; campground host(s) check compliance</li> <li>Future changes to overnight camping fee requirements for developed backcountry campgrounds in the park would apply, consistent with the established framework in the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Camping Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No designated camp areas</li> <li>• Unrestricted dispersed camping, including car camping in backcountry area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No designated camp areas</li> <li>• Unrestricted dispersed camping, including car camping in backcountry area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispersed camping within designated camp areas defined by appropriate elements, such as delineation of roadways or signposts, with area use maps posted at the campground and online</li> <li>• No camping within 200 feet of source springs</li> <li>• Designated overflow walk-in camping areas with defined parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispersed camping</li> <li>• No camping within 200 feet of water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three camping zones defined by appropriate elements, such as delineation of roadways or signposts, with area use maps posted at the campground and online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dispersed camping area with the ability to camp next to vehicles</li> <li>- Overflow walk-in camping area and an associated parking area separate from the camping area</li> <li>- Areas where camping is prohibited</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No camping within 100 feet of source springs</li> </ul>
Campfires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User-created fire rings</li> <li>• NPS-provided fire enclosures, grates, or grills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Remove user-created fire rings at campsites</i></li> <li>• Retain communal fire ring at Lower Spring</li> <li>• Encourage the use of NPS-provided fire enclosures, grates, grills, or firepans</li> <li>• Visitors to haul out ash and charcoal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Remove user-created fire rings at campsites</i></li> <li>• Retain communal fire ring at Lower Spring</li> <li>• Encourage the use of NPS-provided fire enclosures, grates, grills, or firepans</li> <li>• Visitors to haul out ash and charcoal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of all fire enclosures and fire rings</li> <li>• No campfires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Remove user-created fire rings at campsites</i></li> <li>• Retain communal fire ring at Lower Spring</li> <li>• Encourage the use of NPS-provided fire enclosures, grates, grills, or firepans</li> <li>• Visitors to haul out ash and charcoal</li> </ul>

<b>Management Elements</b>	<b>Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend</b>
“Chicken Strip” Airstrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airstrip open for use; special regulation pending</li> <li>• Camping allowed at airstrip</li> <li>• Continuation of MOU with Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) for maintenance of the Chicken Strip airstrip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airstrip open for use; special regulation pending</li> <li>• Camping allowed at airstrip</li> <li>• Visitors required to pack out waste</li> <li>• Continuation of MOU with RAF for maintenance of the Chicken Strip airstrip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airstrip open for use; special regulation pending</li> <li>• No camping allowed at airstrip</li> <li>• Allow for additional airplane tiedowns with NPS approval</li> <li>• Continuation of MOU with RAF for maintenance of the Chicken Strip airstrip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of the airstrip</li> <li>• Chicken Strip airstrip removed from MOU with RAF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airstrip open for use; special regulation pending</li> <li>• Camping allowed at airstrip</li> <li>• Allow for additional airplane tiedowns with NPS approval</li> <li>• Continuation of MOU with RAF for maintenance of the Chicken Strip airstrip</li> <li>• Visitors required to pack out waste</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Resources</b>					
Ethnographic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of ethnographic significance for the Tribe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of ethnographic significance for the Tribe</li> <li>• Consultation with tribes to identify and maintain ethnographic resources (e.g., native vegetation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of ethnographic significance for the Tribe</li> <li>• Consultation with tribes to identify and maintain ethnographic resources (e.g., native vegetation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of ethnographic significance for the Tribe</li> <li>• Consultation with tribes to identify and maintain ethnographic resources (e.g., native vegetation)</li> <li>• Removal of all development and restoration to natural and ethnographic landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of ethnographic significance for the Tribe</li> <li>• Consultation with tribes to identify and maintain ethnographic resources (e.g., native vegetation)</li> <li>• If necessary, preparation of MOU with SHPO and the Tribe for any adverse effects to ethnographic resources</li> </ul>
Historical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of historical significance for recreational users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of historical significance for recreational users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of historical significance for recreational users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of and mitigation for the effects on elements of the proposed Saline Valley Warm Springs Historic Site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area as an area of historical significance for recreational users</li> <li>• If necessary, preparation of MOU with SHPO for any adverse effects to cultural resources</li> </ul>

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Archeological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS monitoring</li> <li>Monitoring by NPS-trained site stewards</li> <li>Increased education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS monitoring</li> <li>Monitoring by NPS-trained site stewards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS monitoring</li> <li>Monitoring by NPS-trained site stewards</li> <li>Increased education</li> </ul>
Bat Pole and Other Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and manage National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible art</li> <li>Restrictions on artwork not actively enforced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and manage NRHP-eligible art</li> <li>Non-historic artwork removed from wilderness</li> <li>No manipulation of natural or cultural resources (to include disturbance and collection) for the purposes of art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and manage NRHP-eligible art</li> <li>Non-historic artwork removed from wilderness and backcountry area</li> <li>No manipulation of natural or cultural resources (to include disturbance and collection) for the purposes of art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all artwork, including the bat pole</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring to prevent installations of new artwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and manage NRHP-eligible art</li> <li>Non-historic artwork removed from wilderness</li> <li>Retain existing artwork (as of January 1, 2019) in non-wilderness areas</li> <li>New art in non-wilderness allowed if natural and cultural resources are not manipulated, the art is not a permanent fixture, and the art is removed from the site when the visitor creating the art leaves the site</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>					
Toilet Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS maintenance staff pumps vault toilets once or twice a year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPS maintenance staff or contractors pump vault toilets once or twice a year</li> <li>Encourage visitors to pack out waste</li> <li>Education on the benefits of packing out waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vault toilets pumped as needed by NPS maintenance staff, by contractor, or through an MOU with user groups</li> <li>Encourage visitors to pack out waste</li> <li>Education on the benefits of packing out waste</li> <li>Additional toilets could be added to Lower Spring or Palm Spring, if necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of vault toilets</li> <li>Visitors required to carry out human waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vault toilets pumped as needed by NPS maintenance staff, by contractors, or through an MOU with user groups</li> <li>Visitors required to use toilet facilities or pack out waste</li> <li>Education on the benefits of packing out waste</li> <li>Additional toilets could be added to Lower Spring or Palm Spring, if necessary.</li> </ul>

<b>Management Elements</b>	<b>Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend</b>
Dishwashing Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dishwashing stations would be retained</li> <li>Signage at sinks to indicate water is non-potable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain dishwashing stations and add filtration systems to catch food debris</li> <li>Signage at sinks to indicate water is non-potable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain dishwashing stations and add filtration systems to catch food debris</li> <li>Signage at sinks to indicate water is non-potable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of dishwashing stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain dishwashing stations</li> <li>Signage at sinks to indicate water is non-potable</li> </ul>
Settling pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfenced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fence settling pond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fence settling pond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of settling pond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fence settling pond</li> </ul>
Vehicle Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued vehicle repair by camp host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove vehicle support facility</li> <li>Emergency vehicle assistance should not be expected by the visiting public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove vehicle support facility</li> <li>Emergency vehicle assistance should not be expected by the visiting public.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of vehicle repair support facility</li> <li>Emergency vehicle assistance should not be expected by the visiting public.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove vehicle support facility<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Emergency vehicle assistance should not be expected by the visiting public.</li> </ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tubs would not be altered to increase accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the extent possible, facilities would be made accessible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the extent possible, facilities would be made accessible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All facilities would be removed and the site restored. The site would be accessed in the same manner as all backcountry sites in the park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the extent practical, while preserving potential significant historical features, facilities would be made accessible.</li> </ul>

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<sup>4</sup> The National Park Service would close the automobile repair facility when the current NPS camp host leaves or in 3 years, whichever comes first.

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Maintenance of Tubs, Roads, and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No expansion related to tubs<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Upper Spring would remain undeveloped<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Water diverted from source springs to soaking tubs, showers/bathtubs, and dishwashing sinks; all uses have dedicated piping directly from the source springs</li> <li>• Users/camp host(s) maintain plumbing infrastructure and tubs under NPS oversight</li> <li>• Maintenance of Warm Springs Road by users / camp host using large tires or other road drag</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No expansion related to tubs<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Upper Spring would remain undeveloped<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Water diverted from source springs to soaking tubs, showers/bathtubs, and dishwashing sinks; all uses have dedicated piping directly from the source springs</li> <li>• Users/camp host(s) maintain plumbing infrastructure and tubs under NPS oversight</li> <li>• Maintenance of Warm Springs Road by National Park Service in accordance with guidelines for four-wheel drive high clearance roads<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No expansion related to tubs<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Upper Spring would remain undeveloped<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Water diverted from source springs to soaking tubs, showers/bathtubs, and dishwashing sinks; all uses have dedicated piping directly from the source springs</li> <li>• Users/camp host(s) maintain plumbing infrastructure and tubs under NPS oversight</li> <li>• Maintenance of Warm Springs Road by National Park Service in accordance with guidelines for four-wheel drive high clearance roads<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All development and modifications would be removed and the site restored</li> <li>• No water diversion</li> <li>• Maintenance of Warm Springs Road by National Park Service in accordance with guidelines for four-wheel drive high clearance roads<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No expansion related to tubs<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Upper Spring would remain undeveloped<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Water diverted from source springs to soaking tubs, showers/bathtubs, and dishwashing sinks; all uses have dedicated piping directly from the source springs</li> <li>• Users/camp host(s) maintain plumbing infrastructure and tubs under NPS oversight</li> <li>• Maintenance of Warm Spring Road by National Park Service in accordance with guidelines for four-wheel drive high clearance roads<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Per the 2002 GMP (NPS 2002a)

<sup>6</sup> As described in the Death Valley National Park Wilderness and Backcountry Stewardship Plan (NPS 2013a)

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Lower Spring Camp Host Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain permanent housing, water feature, drainage ditch, plumbing, solar array, government vehicles and personal items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain permanent housing, water feature, drainage ditch, plumbing, and personal items with housekeeping policy<sup>7</sup></li> <li>Allow for power system that complies with applicable regulations and cultural landscape</li> <li>Retain government vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove permanent housing; host would provide temporary housing</li> <li>Retain water feature, drainage ditch, plumbing, and personal items with housekeeping policy<sup>7</sup></li> <li>Allow for power system that complies with applicable regulations and cultural landscape</li> <li>Retain government vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all elements of the camp host site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove permanent housing; host would provide temporary housing</li> <li>Retain water feature, drainage ditch, plumbing, and personal items with housekeeping policy<sup>7</sup></li> <li>Allow for power system that complies with applicable regulations and cultural landscape</li> <li>Retain government vehicle</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>					
Camp Host	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-time camp host at Lower Spring; Seasonal camp hosts at Palm Spring</li> <li>Continue with current camp host term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camp host(s) will be present</li> <li>Continue with current camp host term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camp host(s) will be present</li> <li>Camp host term would be one year/season with possible reinstatement; host must re-apply annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No camp host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camp host(s) will be present—year-round camp host at Lower Spring and seasonal camp host at Palm Spring</li> <li>Camp host term would be one year with possible reinstatement; host must re-apply annually</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> Housekeeping policy: The grounds of the camp host site would be kept clutter free. The camp host would not make improvements to the camp host site and would not have more than two vehicles at the camp host site. As this is not a permanent residence, all items at the camp host site should be removable within a two-day notice. There should be no evidence of the host once he or she completes the camp host assignment.

Management Elements	Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative	Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative	Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative	Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative	Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some signs on campground boards</li> <li>Camp host disperses information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education through various media focused on regulatory, health and safety, and compliance information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education through various media focused on regulatory, health and safety, and compliance information</li> <li>Interpretive program to include signs on campground boards and engagement by camp host on topics such as potential for flooding, resource protection, visitor safety, relationship with the Tribe, and history of Saline Valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal outreach and education as appropriate for undeveloped backcountry area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education through various media focused on regulatory, health and safety, and compliance information. Includes wayfinding, promoting preparedness for entering potentially harsh desert conditions, and removal of vehicle repair services</li> <li>Interpretive program to include campground board signs and engagement by camp host on topics such as potential for flooding, resource protection, visitor safety, relationship with the Tribe, and history of Saline Valley</li> </ul>
<b>State and Federal Regulations</b>					
Recreational Water Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No water quality testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with the Office of Public Health to develop an approach for water quality monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with the Office of Public Health to develop an approach for water quality monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tubs would be removed and water from source springs would not be used for recreation purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with the Office of Public Health to develop an approach for water quality monitoring</li> <li>Incorporate a subterranean system for treating wastewater<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> This plan/EIS analyzes the impacts on the environment and on human health from wastewater being diverted to a subterranean system. Prior to implementation, a separate NEPA process may be required for determining the appropriate type of subterranean system.

<b>Management Elements</b>	<b>Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 2: Regulatory Compliance Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 3: Community Engagement Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 4: Restoration Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative 5: NPS Preferred Alternative to Recommend</b>
Hazardous Materials Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and storage on-site not compliant with regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and storage would meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations</li> <li>• Removal of hazardous materials used or stored at the vehicle support facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and storage would meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations</li> <li>• Removal of hazardous materials used or stored at the vehicle support facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of all hazardous materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and storage would meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations</li> <li>• Removal of hazardous materials used or stored at the vehicle support facility</li> </ul>

## ALTERNATIVE ELEMENTS ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER STUDY

During the alternatives development process, the following management actions were considered but dismissed for the following reasons:

**Eliminating Camping.** The National Park Service considered the option of eliminating camping at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. This alternative was dismissed because the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area is a difficult destination to reach for a day trip. Additionally, the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area is also often used as a staging area for visitors who want to explore Saline Valley through activities such as day hikes or bike rides. For these reasons, eliminating camping would be considered too big an impact on visitor experience; therefore, it was dismissed as a management option for the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area.

**Commercial Use.** The National Park Service considered commercial use and using concessionaire services to support the use of the soaking tubs. However, it was decided that this option was not feasible. The use of concessionaire services would likely cause conflicts between user groups and concessionaires; there could also be conflicts with the Tribe. Additionally, commercial services would likely promote more use of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. For these reasons, commercial use was dismissed as a management option for the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area.

**Intensive Development.** In addition to considering concessionaire services, the National Park Service, at the request of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors (cooperating agency), considered a full development alternative. Under this alternative, the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would be converted into a resort-type destination. Intense development of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would increase economic development, but this alternative is not feasible due to the level of NPS management that would be required. Additionally, the National Park Service is tasked with improving and restoring the natural and cultural resources of the park. Intensive development would be inconsistent with this goal; it would not meet the purpose and need for this plan, as described in the “Purpose of and Need for Action” chapter. For these reasons, this alternative was considered but dismissed.

**Transfer the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area to BLM.** Based on internal discussions and public comments, the National Park Service considered the option of transferring the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area to BLM. The deletion of lands from the authorized boundaries of the park requires an act of Congress. In the event this action was pursued, the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would continue to require a management framework by whichever federal agency was managing it, including BLM. This alternative would not provide a framework for resource management, administration, operations, and the management of visitor use at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area. It would not provide the NPS guidance as they work with stakeholder groups in the area, and it would not promote partnership between the National Park Service and the Tribe. The transfer of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area to BLM is outside the scope of the plan and would not resolve the need for action. Therefore, it was dismissed from further consideration.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

The National Park Service has incorporated mitigation measures for the protection of natural and cultural resources into alternatives 2, 3, and 5. These measures are identified in table 1 as italicized text.

Under alternative 4, the restoration of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would reduce impacts on natural and ethnographic resources. Under alternative 4, the National Park Service would mitigate the damages from removal of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Historic Site through complete documentation of the site.

Additionally, steps would be taken to minimize the effects of the fencing under the action alternatives. Alternatives 2, 3, and 5 would use artistic wood fencing similar to the existing fencing around the lawn at Lower Spring. The fencing for alternative 4 would be 5-feet high with four-strand smooth wire fence. The following measures would be taken to reduce the effects of construction of the fence and the visual intrusion on the landscape, which borders wilderness.

- An approved environmental monitor would be present on-site during construction to ensure the protection of environmental resources.
- Fencing construction methods and equipment would be used that would result in minimal ground disturbance and would minimize the visibility of track marks following construction.
- The National Park Service could specify the use of materials in the project plans that would blend into the landscape to reduce visual impacts from the presence of the fence.

While the alternatives require specific mitigation measures, best management practices related to public health and safety from flood events would apply to all alternatives. Drainage patterns indicate that Warm Springs Road is subject to flooding above and below the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area, and visitors attempting to evacuate the area using Warm Springs Road are likely to encounter flooded roadways. Roads are presented in appendix A, figure 3.

Mitigation measures for alternatives that would retain development at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area and a camp host (alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 5) would be the same. In the event of a weather emergency, the camp host would personally communicate with each camper, advise them of flood warnings, and instruct them on how to reach higher safe ground. The higher safe ground is the bluff east of Lower Spring known as the art board and the rock alignment area and the bluff southwest of Palm Spring (appendix A, figure 4). These are areas where visitors the create artwork.

The camp host has the capacity to directly contact the park headquarters and the Inyo County Sheriff's Office for emergencies, such as law enforcement, emergency medical, and search and rescue events. The art board (at Lower Spring) and Bat Rock Road (approximately 1 mile west of the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area) have limited cell coverage, and some users have success using portable cellular booster equipment. Additionally, the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area has technology in place to aid in the event of an emergency, including a base station radio, a vehicle radio, a handheld Bendix King radio, a satellite phone and a weather station. The National Park Service provides all these items to the camp host.

Under alternative 4, the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area would not have a camp host with a site to store emergency contact equipment. Safety information, such as the higher safe ground at the Saline Valley Warm Springs Area, would be available at any of the ranger stations in the park. This is consistent with other backcountry areas of the park.

## ALTERNATIVES