



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Programmatic NEPA-Group Visits to Popular Destinations

Project Number: 12-moja-008/PEPC 39942

Project Description:

Visitors to Mojave National Preserve that are travelling in groups of at least 7 vehicles or 15 people must obtain a special use permit. These groups often want to experience the features that make Mojave National Preserve unique and significant. The visitor information centers at Kelso Depot, Hole-in-the-Wall, and Barstow direct visitors to popular destinations.

The purpose of this PEPC project is to revisit these activities and update the environmental compliance under which special use permits are issued. Previous programmatic compliance is documented under PEPC #15957 and 06-ce-046P. At that time (2006), popular destinations were defined as: Cinder Cones & Lava Flows, Kelso Depot, Kelso Dunes, Granite Mountains, Zzyzx/Soda Springs, Cima Dome and Joshua Tree Forest, Rock Springs, Mid Hills, Hole-in-the-Wall, Clark Mountain, Lanfair Valley, Piute Springs and Fort Piute. Developed trails include: Lake Tuendae Nature Trail, Teutonia Peak Trail, Hole-in-the-Wall Nature Trail, Rings Trail, and Mid Hills to Hole-in-the-Wall Trail. Other routes include Quail Basin, Keystone Canyon, Caruthers Canyon, Castle Peaks, and Piute Creek.

This list of destinations needs to be updated, as well as the activities covered for group special use permits.

Project Locations:

Location

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
District:	throughout the Preserve	Section:	
Geo. Marker:		Other:	

Mitigation(s):

- No mitigations identified.

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.

Mojave National Preserve staff has completed an interdisciplinary review of the proposed action. The Barber Peak Loop trail and the Rock House-Rock Spring Loop trail should be added to the list of popular destinations. Reviewers did not identify any potentially significant adverse impacts to the natural or cultural resources of the

Preserve, and had no other substantive comments. Impairment is not expected to result from permitting groups to these points of interest. This proposal is, therefore, categorically excluded from further review under NEPA.

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 (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

Superintendent: Lawrence J. Whalen Date: 1/3/12
acting

NPS Contact: [Signature] Date: 30 January 2012