



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Replace staff gage at MC Spring
Project Number: 13-moja-014/PEPC 46104
Project Description:

The staff gage at MC Spring needs to be replaced. The existing gage is 1/2-inch PVC pipe staff gage coming up above the water surface in the center of MC Spring (see photo in attachment below). A staff gage is a vertical pipe or stick submerged in water with part above water and marked or graduated to allow measurement of water level. The existing staff gage at MC Spring is an old piece of PVC pipe with hand-drawn marks that do not allow for accurate measurements.

The NPS Mojave Network Inventory & Monitoring Program proposes to install a new, more accurate gage and collect monitoring data from MC Spring. Monitoring the water level of the spring is important for the endangered Mohave tui chub and, more generally, for water resources in the Preserve. To install the gage, one crew member will enter MC Spring in either a swimsuit or chest waders. No footwear, waders, or other clothing or equipment that has been used in other aquatic environments will be used unless it has been disinfected. Any necessary disinfection will be carried out using the protocol developed by Death Valley National Park to protect Devil's Hole, home to another endangered fish species. This protocol consists of disinfection with a quaternary ammonium-based detergent followed by 14 days of drying.

The staff gage segments will be attached to an 8-foot length of composite decking using brass or anodized screws. The assembled gage will then be pounded into the bottom of the spring pool. In the event that the composite decking cannot be pounded into the substrate, alternative methods will be considered, such as pounding a piece of rebar into the substrate and fastening the staff gage to the rebar.

Project Locations:

Location

County:	San Bernardino	State:	CA
District:	Soda Dry Lake	Section:	Zzyzx/Desert Studies Center
Geo. Marker:		Other:	MC Spring

Mitigation(s):

- In circumstances when it is deemed necessary to conduct activities near sites known to support threatened or endangered species, such work will be performed in a way (specified by the T&E Biologist) to minimize impacts to the listed species (e.g., working quietly on-site, and minimizing time in or near habitats en route to their work sites).

Replacement of staff gage at MC Spring must be scheduled outside of the spawning period for Mohave tui chub. Spawning usually subsides by the end of April.
Contact: Neal Darby, (760) 252-6146, neal_darby@nps.gov.

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.5 Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.

Explanation:

Park staff has completed an expedited review of the proposed monitoring activities. Mitigation is required to minimize adverse impacts to the Mohave tui chub during spawning. Reviewers were otherwise supportive of the proposal to replace the staff gage at MC Spring. No other potentially significant adverse impacts were identified. By complying with the mitigation described herein, impairment is not expected to result from the proposed actions.

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: Stephan R. Abbott Date: 3-18-13

NPS Contact: [Signature] Date: 03/18/2013