

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

EXPAND AND REDESIGN OAK BOTTOM CAMPGROUND

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area

National Park Service

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve visitor experience at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area (NRA), and specifically, Oak Bottom Campground. The existing campground at Oak Bottom is seasonally very popular, becomes overcrowded, and does not adequately accommodate the growing trend of recreational vehicle (RV) camping. In addition, the tent camping area is composed of a large number of sites in a small area. The resultant overcrowding has led to increasing numbers of law enforcement interventions at the campground and has stressed the aging campground infrastructure, leading to the deferred maintenance issues that can be observed at the campground today. Some of these maintenance challenges become safety concerns for visitors.

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to improve the visitor camping experience by reducing the density of existing campsites up to 50%, while achieving a maximum number of 110 campsites in the area, redesigning the existing RV campground parking lot area, relocating the general store and amphitheater to an area closer to the campground, and providing other improvements and amenities described herein. This proposed action is needed to provide a high-quality recreation experience; reduce safety hazards; provide facilities adequate to meet the concessioner contract for numbers of campsites and services; and to alleviate visitor conflicts, extensive soil compaction, erosion, and vegetation degradation.

ALTERNATIVES

Selected Action

The selected action is the preferred alternative (alternative D), as evaluated in the environmental assessment (EA). There were no substantive public or agency comments on the environmental assessment; therefore, there were no modifications incorporated into the project after the review period. The selected action meets the purpose and need for action by providing campground expansion onto land adjacent to Oak Bottom Campground where walk-in and drive-in tent and RV campsites will be provided, redesigning the existing Oak Bottom Campground to support drive-in tent camping, redesigning the existing Oak Bottom RV campground located on the parking lot to provide a quality camping experience, creating new boat-in campsites on the Whiskeytown Lake shoreline, and providing a safe visitor experience. This action also meets planning objectives by providing recreational and educational opportunities, improved law enforcement, safe visitor experience/emergency response, maintenance, and managing NRA resources in this portion of Whiskeytown NRA.

General Description of the Work

The selected action (preferred alternative) includes expansion of the existing campground onto two undeveloped peninsulas adjacent to and west of the existing campground. The existing campground area will be redesigned to reduce the density of campsites and to develop several boat-in campsites. The newly developed peninsulas will provide drive-in campsites for tent camping or RV sites. Walk-in or drive-in campsites will be added northeast of the existing campground, i.e., between the present boat launch ramp and the marina. These sites will include tent pads, picnic tables, barbeques, bear-proof storage containers, water, and a vault toilet. The area northeast of the existing campground will accommodate one to five additional walk-in tent sites.

The selected alternative also includes the addition of boat-in only campsites on selected sites on the shoreline of Whiskeytown Lake. The boat-in campsites will vary in size to accommodate two to four campsites. Some sites could be designated as accessible only to kayaks or canoes. The boat-in sites will be spread out along the lakeshore and away from vehicle traffic, RV generators, and up to several hundred other campers that are typically associated with conventional campground settings and will provide a more primitive and innovative camping experience for visitors. Each boat-in camping area will typically contain two campsites, but a few will contain three and include a picnic table, tent pad, fire ring, bear-proof storage container, and composting toilet. The boat-in campsites will be established approximately 50 feet from shore with floating docks. These sites will be operated and maintained by the concessioner, as will all campsites associated with the Oak Bottom Campground Expand and Redesign Project. Ten boat-in sites will be considered with the goal of developing six. These sites will only be used during the summer peak season between May and September when the lake is at “full pool.”

The selected alternative will result in a maximum of 110 campsites on the three peninsulas, hill and boat-in shoreline, of which approximately 41 will be tent camping only (including boat-in sites), 7 to 9 will be RV campsites, 12 will be boat-in sites, and 45 will accommodate both RVs and tent camping. Two each of the tent, RV, and boat-in sites will be wheelchair accessible. This alternative encompasses approximately 55 to 60 acres of disturbance, will reclaim and revegetate about 10 acres at the existing campground, and will reduce the density of the campground by 50%.

In addition to expanding the existing campground onto the adjacent peninsulas and hills and adding boat-in sites along the shoreline, the selected action will provide many additional improvements, including: (1) better vehicular access, circulation, and parking for cars and RVs; (2) new restrooms/showers within the campground; (3) a new, larger camp store adjacent to the campground; (4) new campground entrances; (5) upgraded RV campground (in the parking lot) by reducing the number of spaces by half and separating the existing spaces with shade trees and shade structures, adding natural surface areas for tents and lawn chairs, new picnic tables, and fire grates; (6) floating docks added to boat-in campsites; (7) long-term erosion control and revegetation of existing disturbed sites and new temporarily disturbed areas; (8) installing improved and additional walkways, paths, and lighting throughout the campground area; (9) moving the amphitheater from the current isolated location to a site within the campground; (10) adding to each new campsite a picnic table, tent-pitching site, grill, and bear-proof storage container; and (11) creating a 30-foot buffer

around the shoreline of Whiskeytown Lake and the historic Water Ditch Trail—fencing may be installed to protect some areas from social trails and erosion.

General Construction Schedule

It is anticipated that the project will be conducted in phases as funds become available or line item budget requests are filled. An example of phasing would be: constructing the new campground facilities on the eastern adjacent peninsulas so that the existing campground would remain open during this phase of construction. Construction within the existing campground would occur at a later date, so that visitors could use the new facilities while the existing campground is being rehabilitated.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Four alternatives were considered in detail in the environmental assessment; they are: (1) alternative A—the no-action alternative; (2) alternative B—expansion of the campground to the west; (3) alternative C—expansion of the campground to the west and northeast; and (4) alternative D—expansion of the campground to the west, northeast, and boat-in sites (the preferred alternative described above).

Alternative A (the no-action alternative) would continue the existing conditions at Oak Bottom Campground, which is one of two campgrounds (the other is Dry Creek Campground) on the shoreline of Whiskeytown Lake. Oak Bottom Campground is open year-round and operated and maintained under contract with the concessioner, Forever Resorts, LLC. The tent campground provides 98 sites. Seventeen of the sites are on the lake shoreline where boats may be moored. Each tent site has a table, fire grate, space to erect a tent, and bear-proof storage container; a maximum of six people per campsite is allowed. There are two comfort stations with flush toilets. All sites are walk-in; the distance from the parking area to campsites varies from approximately 10 feet to 500 feet. Some sites can accommodate back-in RVs; however, the two back-in sites are reserved for campground hosts and not available to the public. The existing tent sites are all within an area of approximately 29.5 acres. Sites are close together (between 25 feet to 50 feet apart, occasionally more) and generally provide little to no privacy.

The existing RV campground is in the large parking area near the boat launch ramp and contains 22 sites. The campground surface is asphaltic concrete and provides no shade or RV-designed amenities. There is a restroom facility in the RV campground; however, individual sites do not have picnic tables, electrical hookups, or fire grates; a dump station and a potable water source is nearby. Tent camping is not allowed in the RV campground. Other facilities at Oak Bottom Campground include a newly constructed marina providing boat mooring and rental; a small convenience store stocked with basic camping and boating supplies; a boat launch ramp adjacent to the RV campground; a swim beach with a large picnic area, restrooms, and showers; an amphitheater for interpretive programs and day use; and a fishing pier accessible to visitors with disabilities.

Alternative B would expand the existing Oak Bottom Campground onto two undeveloped peninsulas adjacent to and west of the existing campground. Under alternative B, the existing

campground area would be redesigned, primarily into drive-in tent campsites and several boat-in-campsites. The newly developed peninsulas would provide drive-in tent and RV campsites. In this alternative, there would be approximately 92 to 95 campsites on the three peninsulas, of which approximately 28 would be tent camping only, 7 to 9 would be RV campsites in the parking lot, 12 would be boat-in sites, and 45 would accommodate both RVs and tent camping. Two each of the tent, RV, and boat-in campsites would be wheelchair accessible. Development of the two peninsulas would result in the campground occupying approximately 49 acres.

This alternative would include the other 11 improvements listed above to be performed under the selected alternative.

Under alternative C, the existing Oak Bottom Campground and peninsulas to the west would be redesigned and developed as described above in alternative B, with expansion of the existing campground onto two undeveloped peninsulas adjacent to and west of the existing campground. Alternative C would include the additional improvements described under alternative B. Alternative C would also include adding walk-in or drive-in campsites northeast of existing Oak Bottom Campground, i.e., between the present boat-launch ramp and marina. These sites would include tent pads, picnic tables, barbeques, bear-proof storage containers, water, and a vault toilet. The area northeast of existing Oak Bottom Campground may accommodate one to five additional walk-in tent sites, resulting in approximately 100 to 102 campsites on the three peninsulas and hill, of which up to 33 would be for tent camping only, 7 to 9 would be RV campsites in the parking lot, 12 would be boat-in sites, and 45 would accommodate both RVs and tent camping. Two each of the tent, RV, and boat-in sites would be wheelchair accessible. This alternative encompasses approximately 53 acres and would include the other 11 improvements listed above to be performed under the selected alternative.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying criteria identified in section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), to each alternative considered. In accordance with NEPA, the environmentally preferred alternative will:

- fulfill the responsibility of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations
- assure for all generations a safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surrounding
- attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation or other undesirable and unintended consequences

- preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice
- achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities
- enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources (NEPA, section 101)

The environmentally preferred alternative in this environmental assessment is the NPS preferred alternative (alternative D). This alternative was selected based on the following criteria: (1) best fulfills criterion 1 by fulfilling the responsibilities of the National Park Service as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations by improving the visitor experience and the natural landscape; (2) best meets criterion 2 by creating safe and aesthetically pleasing recreational facilities for visitors to Oak Bottom Campground and to Whiskeytown NRA, safety is improved by reducing campground density, thereby reducing visitor conflicts; (3) better addresses criterion 3 by specifying sustainability in construction of facilities at the campground without compromising the environment and without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) better meets criterion 4 by preserving important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage by allowing revegetation of degraded areas due to overcrowding, and by preserving a historic trail; and (5) best meets criterion 6 by constructing an energy efficient building. Alternative D will protect visitor and employee health, safety, and welfare and provide the most recreational diversity, while minimizing disturbance to natural resources for Oak Bottom Campground; therefore, alternative D is the environmentally preferred alternative regarding aesthetic, cultural, and natural resources.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures are presented as part of the action alternatives. These actions have been developed to lessen the adverse effects of the proposed action. Mitigation measures will be funded through the construction budget unless specifically noted in the following table. Appropriate mitigation measures will be included in the construction contract specifications.

TABLE 1. MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Resource Area	Mitigation	Responsible Party
General Considerations	1. The NPS project manager will ensure that the project remains confined within the parameters established in the compliance documents and that mitigation measures will be properly implemented.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance
	2. Construction zones will be identified and flagged before beginning construction and all disturbances will be confined to the flagged areas. All project personnel will be instructed that their activities must be confined to locations within flagged areas and all equipment and materials must remain within these areas. Disturbances beyond the construction zone will be prohibited. This mitigation does not exclude necessary temporary structures such as silt-control barriers.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	3. All tools, equipment, barricades, signs, surplus materials, and rubbish will be removed from the project work limits upon project completion. Any asphalt or concrete surfaces damaged due to work on the project will be repaired to original condition. All demolition debris will be removed from the project site, including all visible metal and concrete.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	4. Construction vehicle engine idling will be limited to reduce construction equipment emissions.	NPS–Chief, Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	5. Best management practices to reduce spills will be used during refueling and other activities that may release petroleum products into the environment.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	6. A hazardous spill plan will be in place, stating what actions will be taken in the case of a spill and preventive measures to be implemented such as placement of refueling facilities, storage, and handling hazardous materials, etc.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	7. All fuel, transmission, or brake fluid leaks, or other hazardous waste leaks, spills, or releases will be reported immediately to the designated safety officer. The safety officer will be responsible for spill material removal and disposal to an approved off-site landfill and, if necessary, will notify the appropriate federal agency.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
General Considerations	8. All equipment on the project site will be maintained in a clean and well-functioning state to avoid or minimize contamination from automotive fluids and unnecessary noise.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	9. Staging for construction vehicles and equipment will be located in previously disturbed areas approved by the National Park Service, outside of high visitor use areas, and will be clearly identified in advance.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement

TABLE 1. MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Resource Area	Mitigation	Responsible Party
	10. Dust abatement measures will be used to reduce deposition on vegetation adjacent to and downwind of project sites.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	11. Silt fencing or other approved erosion-control techniques will be installed/used to prevent sedimentation to the lake using best management practices for controlling nonpoint source pollution during construction and sedimentation and erosion during small storm events. The contractor will ensure all applicable permits are obtained prior to construction, including section 401 and 404 permits.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	12. All potential contaminants (rubbish or debris, introduction of nonnative species, etc.) will be excluded or removed from the environment.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	13. Demolition debris such as asphalt and concrete will be recycled when possible.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	14. Before any equipment is brought into the NRA, it will be pressure washed or steam cleaned in order to remove nonnative seeds. Cleaning shall consist of the removal of all dirt, grease, debris, and material that may harbor noxious weeds and their seeds. Cleaning shall occur off the project site. Examples of equipment are backhoes, tractors, loaders, excavators, dozers, bobcats, wheeled compressors, or trucks and trailers that have traveled off-road. This restriction shall not apply to equipment responding to the initial attack of wildland fire where fire spread is threatening life or property.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
General Considerations	15. Fueling project-related vehicles and equipment will take place away from the lake, and a contingency plan to control petroleum product spills during the project will be developed. Absorbent pads and containment booms will be stored on-site to facilitate cleanup of any accidental petroleum spills.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement
	16. Any soil exposed near water as a result of the project shall be protected from erosion (with plastic sheeting, filter fabric, etc.) after exposure, and stabilized as soon as practicable (with vegetation matting, hydroseeding, etc.). If erosion-control materials are used, only tightly woven fiber netting or nonbinding materials, e.g., rice straw shall be used for erosion control or other purposes at the project site to ensure that small mammals and reptiles do not become trapped. No plastic-tied wattles shall be used.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS – delegated project monitor ensures enforcement

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Resource Area	Mitigation	Responsible Party
Lightscares	17. The project will have no incandescent or mercury vapor lighting, and will use compact fluorescent and LED low wattage light bulbs.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract
Viewshed	18. The new buildings will be low-profile in design.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract
	19. The buildings will be constructed with low reflectivity materials, finishes, and compatible colors.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract
Natural Resources	20. To avoid introduction of nonnative/noxious plant species, no imported hay bales will be used.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff
	21. Reclaimed areas will be monitored after construction to determine if reclamation efforts are successful or if additional remedial actions are necessary. Remedial actions could include installation of erosion-control structures and controlling nonnative plant species. Additional remedial actions will be funded by the National Park Service.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff
	22. After completing construction, contractor will revegetate the area or cover bare soil with local litter and duff mulch as soon as possible. This mulch will provide a source of seeds to reestablish native vegetation and reduce the risk of nonnative seeds germinating. Ideally, the litter and duff should be collected from surrounding areas without denuding the collection area; leaving at least 50% of the material in place without disturbing vegetation.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff
Natural Resources	23. Construction and restoration materials will be free of invasive weed seeds or other propagative plant parts. Such materials include boulders, soil, sand, gravel, rock, road base, straw, and silt and erosion-control materials. Weed-free status may be ensured by pressure washing, steam cleaning, fumigation, heat sterilization, or certification from the supplier. Eliminating invasive plant seeds may raise the cost of some projects, but will prevent much more costly and prolonged invasive plant control efforts in the future.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff

TABLE 1. MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Resource Area	Mitigation	Responsible Party
	<p>24. Large quantities of construction and restoration materials may be prohibitively expensive to sterilize. The risk of importing invasive plants in bulk materials will be minimized by inspecting proposed quarries or source sites for presence of invasive plants. If no local weed-free sources can be located, potentially contaminated materials may be accepted if mitigation is implemented. Mitigation might include stripping the top 12 inches of material or requiring fresh material stored less than one month, as specified by vegetation management staff.</p> <p>For construction projects, the project manager and/or COR will be responsible for contacting vegetation management staff to inspect sources. For materials procured by Whiskeytown NRA for use by NRA staff, the NRA contracting officer will be responsible for contacting vegetation management staff to inspect sources.</p>	<p>NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff</p>
	<p>25. Rare habitats, especially aquatic and wetland habitats, will be avoided to the extent possible to protect threatened and endangered species and populations, fish species, waterfowl, etc. If wetland impacts cannot be avoided, efforts will be made to restore them on similar shoreline sites on a 1:1 basis.</p>	<p>NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff</p>
	<p>26. A biological monitor will be present to mark rare plant sites for avoidance and identify bat roosts to ensure that individuals are not killed, to identify and move hibernating western pond turtles or eggs, and active bird nests, and advise construction personnel.</p>	<p>NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff</p>
	<p>27. To limit the impact to nesting birds, construction will occur outside the bird nesting and rearing season and the major recreation season; construction could occur from August to March.</p>	<p>NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Natural Resources Staff</p>
Archeological Resources	<p>28. If, during construction, significant archeological resources are discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be halted until the resources could be identified, documented, and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in consultation with the California state historic preservation office.</p>	<p>NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Cultural Resources Staff</p>
	<p>29. Should human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony be discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 USC 3001) will be followed.</p>	<p>NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Cultural Resources Staff</p>

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Resource Area	Mitigation	Responsible Party
	30. If construction impacts an area where artifacts were historically present, a qualified archeologist must be present during construction. A tribal monitor will be present during construction activities in the area of site CA-SHA-272. Investigate the area and mitigate any possible impacts to the possible cultural resource of interest to the Wintu Tribe identified during the site visit. Consult with the Wintu tribal representative, as appropriate, per previous discussions.	NPS–Chief, Division of Maintenance ensures in contract NPS –Cultural Resources Staff Tribal Monitor, is Warranted

WHY THE SELECTED ACTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE) WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined by 40 CFR 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts that require analysis in an environmental impact statement: No major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that will require analysis in an environmental impact statement.

The primary impact topics identified in the environmental analysis and documented in the environmental assessment included the following: soils, biological resources (vegetation and wildlife), threatened and endangered species and species of special concern, national recreation area operations (law enforcement/emergency response, maintenance, and concession operations), archeological resources, visitor use and experience (RV campground and walk-in tent campground), and viewsheds and lightscapes. Impacts to these resources were identified at the negligible to moderate level.

Degree of effect on public health or safety: Under the selected action, Oak Bottom Campground, which was originally designed as a picnic area in the 1960s, will be redesigned and expanded to provide a quality camping experience by eliminating overcrowding, enhancing maintenance, decreasing law enforcement involvement, and decreasing degradation of the natural environment. The selected action provides a long-term solution to improve the visitor camping experience by updating the campground to provide modern visitor amenities, reducing the density of existing campsites up to 50% while maintaining a maximum number of 110 campsites in the area, redesigning the existing parking lot-based Oak Bottom RV campground area to improve visitor experience and aesthetics, relocating the general store and amphitheater nearer to the campground to address safety concerns and convenience, and providing modern visitor amenities. The impacts to public health and safety will be minor to moderate, beneficial, and long term.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically

critical areas: As described in the environmental assessment, designated critical habitat, wetlands, floodplains, ecologically critical areas, wild and scenic rivers, and other unique natural areas will not be affected. Through consultation with appropriate agencies and research, the National Park Service has determined that there are no known designated critical habitat, wetlands, floodplains, ecologically critical areas, wild and scenic rivers, and other unique natural areas identified in the project area that could be affected by the current project actions. Through consultation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, it was determined that there are no prime or unique farmlands associated with the project area. Through consultation with the California SHPO there are no National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-listed or eligible sites within the area of potential effect.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources: As described in the environmental assessment, significant scientific or designated cultural and historic resources will not be affected.

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial: There were no highly controversial effects identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks: There were no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration: The selected action neither establishes a NPS precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, impacts: The selected action of the environmental assessment analyzed impacts to soils, biological resources, archeological resources, visitor use and experience, NRA operations, and viewsheds and lightscapes. As described in the environmental assessment, cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the preferred alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. There are no projected future actions that will contribute to cumulative effects.

Degree of effect on soils; biological resources; and threatened, endangered, and species of special concern; coastal and marine resources; or water quality: Construction-related impacts will result in long-term beneficial and negligible to minor adverse impacts to the Oak Bottom Campground soils resource. Construction-related impacts and human presence will result in short- and long-term, negligible to minor, adverse effects to Oak Bottom Campground area biological resources including vegetation types, wildlife populations, and threatened and endangered species and species of special concern. The selected action will contribute negligible to minor, short- and long-term, adverse and beneficial cumulative impacts to soils and biological resources. There will be no effect on coastal and marine resources or water quality.

Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection laws: The selected action violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY CONSULTATION

Scoping

A press release initiating scoping and describing the proposed action was issued on September 26, 2010. A public meeting was held on September 30, 2010, at Redding City Hall; 10 people were in attendance. Comments were solicited during a public scoping period that ended on October 26, 2010. Thirteen comments were received from the public. Comments included the desire to maintain day use access on the historic Water Ditch Trail (hiking and biking), concerns for potential impacts to natural resources and wildlife from the expansion onto the two peninsulas, and keeping day use and camping fees low. Some specifically stated that they thought the expansion to decrease the density was necessary and others supported the boat-in sites. One felt that the docks at the boat-in sites were not necessary, another thought the boat-in sites would cause additional erosion, and another felt that the boat-in sites would compete with day users. One commenter responded that the drive-in sites would be an improvement due to the current distance to the walk-in sites. One commenter requested maps of the different alternatives.

There were comments about specifics for the design of the campground including not over-developing it and keeping the tent and RV campers separate. One commenter proposed specific RV site amenities and RV site sizes and circulation patterns, and another proposed specific amenities to the campground and facilities. One commenter suggested more tent sites than proposed. The program for the campground expansion has been determined and is outlined in the alternatives description; however, specific design for the campground expansion would not occur until the decision has been made on the final alternative and the NEPA process is completed.

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, a letter requesting tribal consultation was mailed in November 2010 to the Redding Rancheria. Consultation with the Wintu tribes and Redding Rancheria to identify culturally sensitive sites was completed for this project on December 13, 2010, and February 4, 2011, respectively. The local Wintu tribal representative met with Whiskeytown NRA staff on-site on February 4, 2011. Wintu tribal representatives were in concurrence that site CA-SHA-272 is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but requested a tribal monitor be present during construction activities in the area.

In addition, a second possible cultural resource of interest to the Wintu tribal members was identified during the site visit. A plan was agreed upon by Whiskeytown NRA staff and Wintu representatives to investigate the area and mitigate any possible impacts. In accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(c), the National Park Service sent a letter to the California SHPO requesting concurrence that site CA-SHA-272 was not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Concurrence was received on May 4, 2011.

Whiskeytown NRA falls within the area covered under the Northwest Forest Plan. Under the streamlined consultation process, agency actions that would result in a “no effect” determination do not require further section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Therefore, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was not initiated.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This environmental assessment/assessment of effect was available for formal public and agency review for a 30-day review period from August 15 through September 16, 2011, and printed copies or links to the online document were sent to approximately 17 interested individuals, agencies, and organizations. The review period was publicized in the local newspaper, The Redding Searchlight, which announced the Environmental Assessment on August 18, 2011 and in a feature article on August 28, 2011.

Two hundred postcards were mailed to previous campground visitors who had registered with the Oak Bottom concessioner informing them about the environmental assessment. This document was available on the Internet at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/whis> and hard copies were made available at the Whiskeytown NRA visitor center, park headquarters, and local libraries in Anderson, Burney, and Redding.

Whiskeytown NRA received 14 pieces of correspondence during the review period. All comments were nonsubstantive in nature. Substantive comments are those that:

- question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the environmental assessment
- question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analyses
- present reasonable alternatives or elements of alternatives other than those presented in the environmental assessment
- provide information that could lead to changes or revisions in the proposal

Comments: The majority of the comments were in support of all or components of the preferred alternative, or made additional suggestions. Of those in support of expanding the campground, some did not feel the boat-in sites should be included because of limited day-use areas along the shore. Another suggested that the boat-in sites should not have docks or be too large (limited to two to three campsites per boat-in site). One commenter specifically suggested that boat-in sites 3, 4, and 6 be left as day use areas and that site 10 be a kayak-in only site. One comment was to ensure that each boat-in campsite have table, fire ring, bear-proof storage containers, and composting toilet.

Response: Ten boat-in sites were analyzed in the environmental assessment with the goal of eventually developing up to six sites. A few of the boat-in sites may contain up to six or eight campsites to accommodate larger parties. Decision on actual location and size of campsites would be determined during the design phase of the project. Some sites may be designated as accessible only to kayaks or canoes. Each boat-in campsite would include a picnic table, tent pad, fire ring, bear-proof storage container, and composting toilet. The boat-in sites would

be established inland (approximately 50 feet from shore) with floating docks to minimize impacts to the shore line.

Comments: Some suggested that RV sites accommodate 40-foot RVs, have RV hook-ups for water and electricity at each RV site, or that there be at least 45 RV sites. One commenter supported the construction of new facilities, but not the expansion of the campground to new areas. One commenter requested the campground be changed to accommodate cars at tent camping sites; and another requested picnic tables and fire rings at RV sites and more water spigots throughout the campground. One commenter did not support expansion onto the peninsula northeast of the existing Oak Bottom Campground, i.e., between the present boat launch ramp and marina because it would create congestion with current users.

Response: The Whiskeytown general management plan (GMP 1999) identifies goals to improving visitor experience at Oak Bottom tent campground by reducing density by approximately 50%. Reducing density requires expansion into currently undeveloped areas. The campground would be designed as drive-in campsites. Other improvements include up to nine RV campsites in the redesigned parking lot and 45 sites in the campground. Final designs will determine the length of RV that each site will accommodate. RV hook-ups are included in the preferred alternative; however, the final designs will be based on construction budgets. Expansion onto the peninsula northeast of the existing Oak Bottom Campground, i.e., between the present boat launch ramp and marina, would be very low density, with only up to five campsites.

Comments: A few comments included suggestions for a campground at Brandy Creek and Whiskey Creek day use areas, and improvements for day use areas in general. These comments are noted by Whiskeytown NRA staff, but outside the scope of this environmental assessment.

IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES OR VALUES

The implementation of the selected action will not constitute an impairment of Whiskeytown NRA resources or values. Impacts documented in the environmental assessment and summarized above will not affect resources or values key to the natural and cultural integrity of the NRA or alter opportunities for enjoyment of the NRA. The selected action will not impair Whiskeytown NRA resources and will not violate the NPS Organic Act. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the impacts described in the environmental assessment, the lack of agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker, in accordance with NPS *Management Policies 2006*. Implementation of the selected action (preferred alternative) will not result in major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is: (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of Whiskeytown NRA, (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the NRA, or (3) identified as a goal in the Whiskeytown NRA general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents. An impairment determination has been prepared pursuant to interim guidance (July 6, 2010) and is presented in the environmental assessment.

CONCLUSION

The selected action does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement. The selected action will not have a major impact on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are considered short term and negligible to moderate in intensity, and long term and negligible to moderate in intensity. Beneficial environmental impacts that could occur are considered long term and minor to moderate in intensity. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the selected action (preferred alternative) to ensure there are no significant impacts. There are no foreseen significant adverse impacts on natural or cultural resources, public health and safety, NRA management, or other unique characteristics of the area and region. Long-term minor to moderate beneficial impacts to the visitor experience will result from the selected action. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the selected action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection laws, nor will it cause impairment of park resources or values.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for this project and, thus, will not be prepared.

Recommended:

 9-27-2011

Jim, Milestone, Superintendent Whiskeytown NRA Date

Approved:

 10/4/11

Christine S. Lehnertz, Pacific West Regional Director Date