



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Supplemental Information Report Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Wilderness Stewardship Plan

PEPC Project Number: 72703

Description of Action (Project Description):

In May 2015, a record of decision (ROD) was approved by the National Park Service (NPS) Pacific West Regional Director for the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (WSP/FEIS). The ROD describes the Selected Action, alternative 2, and the rationale for its selection.

The purpose of the WSP/FEIS is to establish a framework for managing wilderness and areas managed as wilderness within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) in order to preserve wilderness character, provide opportunities for and encourage public use and enjoyment of wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act and other laws and policies, improve conditions in areas where there may be unacceptable levels of impacts on wilderness character, and protect the natural and cultural resources within the SEKI wilderness.

The analysis of commercial services in the WSP/FEIS was informed by an extent necessary determination (END) which was conducted in accordance with the Wilderness Act. The requirement for an END derives from Section 4(d)(5) of the Wilderness Act which states that, "[C]ommercial services may be performed within the wilderness areas designated by this Act to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas." The "purposes" referred to in §4(d)(5) are those enumerated in §4(b), which states that "...wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use."

Implementation of the Selected Action from the WSP/FEIS will result in the issuance of commercial use authorizations for those commercial services determined consistent with the Wilderness Act, and necessary and appropriate in wilderness, per the END. The Selected Action caps the number of allowable "commercial service days" (CSDs) wilderness wide and reduces the number of allowable commercial service days in the Mount Whitney Management Area (MWMA), a management area established through the WSP/FEIS. The cap and limits are one of the approved methods in the WSP/FEIS that would be implemented in the next 15-20 years to protect wilderness character.

In preparation for the issuance of commercial use authorizations, the NPS conducted a post-ROD analysis of the data included in the END. During that process, park staff discovered several data errors that led to inaccuracies in the CSD figures presented in the END and WSP/FEIS. Park staff corrected these errors and prepared new calculations which are discussed below. The revised calculations indicate that the NPS could allow an increase in the allocation to the number of commercial service days above the amount identified through the END process for Selected Action, while maintaining the same total number of Visitor Use Days. The purpose of this report is to make a recommendation to the Superintendent on whether new information in the form of revised CSD totals triggers the need for additional analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The report also addresses whether the authorization of additional CSDs would preserve wilderness character.

The ROD describes the Selected Action, alternative 2, and the rationale for its selection. Except for the corrections included in the SIR, no other changes have been made to the ROD.

Project Locations:**Location 1**

County:	Inyo	State:	CA
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Location 2

County:	Tulare	State:	CA
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Location 3

County:	Fresno	State:	CA
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Mitigation(s):

- No mitigations identified.

CE Citation: A.1 Changes or amendments to an approved action when such changes would cause no or only minimal environmental impact.

CE Justification:

The changes, per the analysis in the draft Supplemental Information Report (SIR), do not substantially change the Selected Action. The revised analysis of CSDs will not change the trailhead quotas (the number of entry permits allocated for each trailhead) that have been established by the Selected Action. All commercial service providers will still operate within these quotas. All CSDs must still comply with wilderness regulations and restrictions, including night limits, group size limits, and stock use and grazing restrictions. There would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS. No extraordinary circumstances exist (per Section 3.5), thus, the action has been determined to be categorically excluded per Section 3.4 A.1: Changes or amendments to an approved action when such changes would cause no or only minimal environmental impact, and thus does not trigger the need for a supplemental EIS pursuant to 40 CFR 1502.9(c).

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

Signature

Superintendent: _____ **Date:** _____

Woody Smeck

Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
G. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
H. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and

significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.
L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?	No	The changes, per the analysis in the SIR, do not substantially change the Selected Action, and there would be no to little change to the environmental impacts resulting from the adjustments in CSDs, and the small changes that result are fully evaluated in the WSP/EIS.