United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Great Basin National Park
Baker, Nevada 89311-9701

IN REPLY REFER TO:
N16(GRBA)

November 15, 2010

Dear Interested Parties:

Great Basin National Park is currently seeking issues and comments for a proposed Hydrogeologic Research Project. Your issues and comments will assist with developing alternatives to the proposed action presented below and help in conducting an environmental analysis consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The proposed action consists of a multi-component hydrologic research project. These components consist of:

1. INVESTIGATION OF THE SOURCE OF WATER TO ROWLAND SPRING

This involves:

--- Drilling and constructing two groundwater monitoring wells, each about 200-to-300 feet deep, within Great Basin National Park – one near Cave Springs and one near the lined sewage ponds by the Baker Creek Road;
--- Doing two 48-hour continuous pumping tests - one test at each of the two monitoring wells;
--- Installing a precipitation collector near the existing weather station in the park; and
--- Collecting water samples for laboratory analysis monthly from each of the two wells, from the precipitation collector, from Rowland Spring, and from one location each along Lehman and Baker creeks for one year.

2. INVESTIGATION OF STREAM-AQUIFER INTERACTIONS ALONG SELECTED REACHES OF LEHMAN, SNAKE, AND STRAWBERY CREEKS WITHIN THE PARK

This involves:

--- Installing up to 10 shallow well points at selected locations in each of Lehman and Snake creeks, driven by hand to a depth of about three feet beneath the streambed;
--- Installing temporarily a digital optical temperature-sensing cable in selected reaches of Lehman, Snake, and Strawberry creeks, and its subsequent removal after data collection is completed; and
--- Manually measuring stream flow in Lehman, Baker, Snake, and Strawberry creeks.

3. FOCUSED INVESTIGATION OF STREAM-AQUIFER INTERACTIONS AT A SPECIFIC SITE ON LEHMAN CREEK

This involves:

--- Drilling a cluster of three shallow boreholes within the Park, each less than 100 feet deep, located within 100 feet of Lehman Creek;

--- Doing a 72-to-96-hour continuous pumping test – by pumping the farthest well from Lehman Creek, and monitoring water levels and water temperature in the other monitoring wells, the shallow well points, and the stream; and

--- Collecting water samples for laboratory analysis from the pumped well during the pumping test.

4. A DYE TRACING STUDY

This involves:

--- The introduction of three fluorescent tracer dyes within the Park, one in Baker Creek, one in a cave in the Baker Creek cave system, and one in Pole Canyon creek; and

--- Water sampling at approximately 22 selected locations - to see if dye can be detected in Baker and Lehman creeks, at selected springs (most notably Rowland Spring), and at cave locations downhill to the east and northeast.

Preliminary issues developed by park staff include the effects to and impacts on: cultural resources, visitor experience, socioeconomics, fisheries, wildlife, soils, and water quality.

Two public meetings will be held to describe the project. The first is in Ely, NV at the Conference Center on December 8, 2010. The second is in Baker, NV at the Great Basin Resource Building classroom on December 9, 2010. Both meetings will be from 6 -8 p.m. Comments on the project will be accepted following the presentation.

Information is also available on the National Park Service Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov. This website provides access to current National Park Service plans, environmental impact analyses, and related documents on public review. Comments may be submitted through the PEPC website.

Mailed comments will also be accepted. Please submit comments no later than January 7, 2011, to Attn: Planning, 100 Great Basin National Park, Baker, NV, 89311.

Sincerely,

for Andrew J. Ferguson
Superintendent