

after the last public meeting, whichever is later. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation as appropriate.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on issues related to the West of Devers Upgrade Project by any of the following methods:

- *Web site:* <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/transmission/WestOfDeversProject.html>.

- *Email:* [blm\\_ca\\_west\\_of\\_devers@blm.gov](mailto:blm_ca_west_of_devers@blm.gov).

- *Fax:* 951-697-5299.

- *Mail:* ATTN: Field Manager; Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the BLM California Desert District Office and the Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EIS/EIR.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** R. Brian Paul; telephone 760-337-4445; address ATTN: Field Manager; Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262; email [rpaul@blm.gov](mailto:rpaul@blm.gov). Contact Mr. Paul to have your name added to our mailing list. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact Mr. Paul during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question for Mr. Paul. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Southern California Edison (SCE) is proposing to upgrade and adjust the routes of the following existing 220 kV transmission lines within SCE's existing West of Devers right-of way corridor in incorporated and unincorporated areas of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties: Devers-El Casco (30 miles), El Casco-San Bernardino (14 miles), Devers-San Bernardino (43 miles), Devers-Vista No. 1 and No. 2 (45 miles), Etiwanda-San Bernardino (3.5 miles), and San Bernardino-Vista (3.5 miles). Of the overall 48-mile length of the transmission corridor, approximately 6 miles would cross the reservation Trust Lands (Reservation) of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and approximately 1 mile is on BLM-administered public lands. The BLM lands are located east of the City of Banning and west of the City of Desert Hot Springs in Riverside County.

In addition to the transmission line improvements, substation equipment at Devers, El Casco, Etiwanda, San Bernardino, Timoteo and Tennessee and Vista Substations would be upgraded to accommodate the project changes to transmission and subtransmission systems. Construction of WOD UP would facilitate the full deliverability of new renewable energy generation resources now being developed in eastern Riverside County, including the BLM's Riverside East Solar Energy Zone into the Los Angeles area.

The WOD UP would facilitate progress towards meeting California's Renewable Portfolio Standard goals requiring utilities to produce 33 percent of their electricity sales from renewable energy sources by 2020. Large-scale renewable energy projects in eastern Riverside County play an important role in meeting California's renewable energy goals, allowing for immediate and sizeable deployment, driving costs down, and taking advantage of the state's best renewable energy resources. Additionally, these upgrades are required to comply with transmission reliability standards and will support integration of small scale electricity generation.

This document provides notice that the Palm Springs/South Coast BLM Field Office, Palm Springs, California, intends to prepare a joint EIS/EIR with the California Public Utilities Commission for the WOD UP, announces the beginning of the scoping process, and seeks public input on environmental issues and planning criteria. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the planning process. Preliminary issues for the EIR/EIS have been identified by BLM personnel; Federal, State, and local agencies; and other stakeholders. The issues include: Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources including special status species, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, recreation, traffic, visual resources, cumulative effects, and areas with high potential for renewable energy development, and identification of opportunities to apply mitigation hierarchy strategies for on-site, regional, and compensatory mitigation.

The BLM will use the NEPA public participation requirements to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C.

470(f)) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175 and other policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1501.7.

**Thomas Pogacnik,**  
*Deputy State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

[NPS-PWR-PWRO-15353; PPPWSEK100/PX.P0206452A.00.1]

### Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, California

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The National Park Service announces the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, California. The plan is needed to provide management direction for two designated wilderness areas, several potential wilderness additions, and an area of proposed wilderness. The plan

provides the long-term vision for protecting wilderness character, incorporates new research findings, and uses a new interagency planning framework for preservation of wilderness character. The plan also replaces the current plans-of-record, the 1986 *Backcountry Management Plan* and its accompanying 1986 *Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan*.

**DATES:** All written comments must be postmarked or transmitted not later than 60 days from the date of publication in the **Federal Register** of the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of filing and release of the DEIS. Upon confirmation of this date, we will notify all entities on the project mailing list, and public announcements about the DEIS review period will be posted on the project Web site <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/seki> and distributed via local and regional press media.

**ADDRESSES:** Printed copies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan (DEIS/WSP) will be available at local public libraries (including Three Rivers, Visalia, Fresno, Bakersfield, Bishop and Lone Pine) and in electronic format online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/seki>. Written comments may be submitted directly to this Web site, or may be submitted by mail, hand delivered, or faxed to: Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Attn: DEIS/WSP, 47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271, Fax: (559) 565-4202.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Please contact the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Office of Environmental Compliance and Planning at (559) 565-3102 to speak with an individual.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The DEIS/WSP provides direction for management of visitors and administrative activities within the parks' wilderness. The framework of this WSP is founded on defining the goals and objectives for wilderness management, defining wilderness character for the parks, describing future desired conditions for wilderness, developing visitor use capacity, and determining the types and levels of commercial activities that support wilderness purposes.

The DEIS/WSP addresses visitor capacity, wilderness permitting, group size limits for people and stock, campfire regulations, camping locations and regulations, food storage requirements, human waste management, pack and saddle-stock regulations, stock grazing, maintenance of facilities and trails, and management of frontcountry facilities that support

wilderness use. The DEIS/WSP also analyzes and determines the types and extent of commercial services that are "necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas," as required by § 4(d)(5) of the Wilderness Act. The DEIS/WSP identifies and evaluates the environmental impacts of five alternatives: the no action alternative; and four action alternatives including a preferred alternative. Upon approval, the Final WSP/Final EIS would be implemented over a period of 15-20 years. The NPS is inviting public review of the DEIS to solicit feedback on the proposed alternatives and to gather ideas and concerns for consideration in the Final EIS.

Email comments will not be accepted. Comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment-including your personal identifying information-may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we would be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, are made available for public inspection in their entirety.

The DEIS/WSP identifies five alternatives: the no action alternative (*Alternative 1*) is the continuation of the existing management direction as provided by the 1986 *Backcountry Management Plan* and its accompanying 1986 *Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan*; Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5 (action alternatives) describe a range of reasonable and feasible approaches to meet the purpose and need for action and to achieve the DEIS/WSP objectives. The main variations across the alternatives lie in the key aspects of wilderness management—use levels, access and trails, stock use and grazing, and recreational and administrative infrastructure—which are driven by the different approach to management in each alternative. Each alternative serves visitor and/or operational needs in different ways.

*Alternative 2*, the management preferred alternative, recognizes that Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks wilderness can be broadly categorized as: day use areas close to the

frontcountry; popular overnight areas like the High Sierra, John Muir, and Pacific Crest trails; and low-use overnight areas like the Middle Fork of the Kings and the Hockett Plateau areas. It further recognizes that current and projected visitor use levels pose few threats to wilderness character in the low-use areas under current management, but there may be threats in the popular areas or in areas with sensitive resources that can be mitigated through targeted improvements to current management.

*Alternative 3* increases opportunities for primitive recreation by allowing additional use, which is mostly expected to occur at the most popular areas; however, allowing increased use could result in decreased opportunities for solitude wilderness-wide. In addition, the highest use areas would require additional development and restrictions on visitor behavior in order to preserve the natural quality of wilderness.

*Alternative 4* emphasizes the undeveloped and non-commercial qualities of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks wilderness. The removal of development and reduction of commercial services would increase the self-reliant nature of wilderness recreation. In order to preserve the natural quality of wilderness, the amount of commercial use would be reduced.

*Alternative 5* enhances the quality of solitude available in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks wilderness. The total numbers of permitted visitors and group sizes would be reduced. Reduced use would allow for a reduction in the levels of development and fewer restrictions on visitor behavior.

**Decision Process:** All comments received on the DEIS/WSP will be duly considered in preparing the Final EIS, which at this time is expected to be available in early 2015. A Record of Decision would be prepared no sooner than 30 days after release of the Final EIS. Because this is a delegated EIS, the official responsible for approval of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan is the Regional Director, Pacific West Region, National Park Service; subsequently the official responsible for implementation of the approved Wilderness Stewardship Plan is the Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

Dated: May 5, 2014.

**Christine S. Lehnertz,**

*Regional Director, Pacific West Region.*

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