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**RECORD
OF
DECISION**

1984 PLAN AMENDMENTS
TO THE
OF THE CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA
PLAN OF 1980

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
California

UST 1985

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C344
1985
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California Desert District
1695 Spruce Street
Riverside, California 92507

1600
(C-060.2)

MAY 31 1985

Memorandum

To: State Director (C-910)
From: District Manager, California Desert
Subject: 1984 Amendment Decision

Enclosed is the Record of Decision for the 1984 Amendment Review of the California Desert Plan indicating my approval of the amendments.

The enclosed document is provided for your review and concurrence.

Enclosure

I concur with the California Desert District Manager's amendment decisions attached.

State Director, California Desert

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RECORD OF DECISION

The 1984 amendment review of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan was conducted in accordance with Bureau of Land Management Planning Regulations, 43 CFR 1600 as amended November 23, 1981 (FR, Vol. 46, P. 57448), with the procedures set forth in Chapter 7 of the CDCA Plan 1980, and with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500).

During a 30-day period, from April 16, 1984 to May 15, 1984, approximately 30 amendments were proposed by the public and by the BLM staff. These were screened by BLM management and were considered by the Desert Advisory Council (DAC) at a public "scoping" meeting held in Barstow on May 17, 1984. Five amendments were accepted for consideration in the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). The remainder were rejected, deferred, or could be handled through other administrative processes.

The public comment period on the Draft EA extended from December 12, 1984 to February 11, 1985. Twenty-one written comments were received. Oral comments were accepted at the November meeting of the Advisory council in Lancaster. The DAC gave its recommendations at the Feb. 14, 1985 public meeting in San Bernardino.

The preferred alternatives for Amendments 1D, 1F, and 4 have been changed from those recommended in the Draft EA. Amendment 1D, expansion of the Jawbone-Butterbrecht ACEC, was rejected because planned land exchanges in this area should be completed prior to consideration of this boundary adjustment.

Amendment 1J, expansion of the boundary of the Salt Creek Pupfish/Rail Habitat ACEC, was approved with the modification that only the public lands within the proposed boundary would actually be part of the ACEC.

Amendment 4, the Coso Utility Corridor, was changed slightly to add a small expansion on the south edge of the corridor adjacent to the Naval Weapons Center. This will facilitate the placement of a transmission line through a mountainous area.

The combination of approved amendments comprises the fourth amendment to the Desert Plan. Each component amendment is described below. The environmentally preferred alternative is identified except when there is no significant difference. Proposed amendments which were either rejected or deferred are described in Appendix B of the Draft EA. A summary of public comments is given in the Appendix to this Record of Decision.

AMENDMENT ONE

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Proposed Amendment

Refine original boundaries or modify management prescriptions of 13 ACECs. These changes were proposed when activity plans were prepared for each ACEC over the last two years.

AMENDMENT 1A

EUREKA VALLEY DUNES ACEC (No. 3)

Proposed Amendment

Add two areas of sand which are habitat for two listed endangered species: Eureka Dunes Evening Primrose (Oenothera avita ssp eurekaensis) and Eureka Dune Grass (Swallenia alexandrae), and the Category 1 endangered species Shining Locoweed (Astragalus lentiginosus var micans) (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action.

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment.

Rationale

Enlargement of the ACEC to include two sand areas west of the dunes will aid in protection of sensitive vegetation and fulfill BLM's obligation under the Endangered Species Act.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

Distribution of Rare Plant Species in Eureka Valley

Swallenia alexandreae

Oenothera avita ssp.
eurekaensis

Astragalus letiginosus
var. *micans*

Original ACEC boundary

Additional ACEC boundary

Eureka Sand Dunes ACEC 3

AMENDMENT 1a

AMENDMENT 1B

DARWIN FALLS ACEC (No. 6)

Proposed Amendment

Adjust boundary to correspond to the resources identified for protective management in the CDCA Plan. Exclude Zinc Hill area; include Millers Spring and China Garden Spring areas in Darwin Wash (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The ACEC was designated for intensive protective management of wildlife habitat and scenic qualities. The revised boundary will encompass two important water sources, China Garden Spring and Millers Spring. The highly mineralized area around Zinc Hill, which is incompatible with the purpose of the ACEC, will be removed.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85
Date

DARWIN FALLS/CANYON **ACEC 6**

- Original boundary (CDCA Plan)
- Amended boundary

AMENDMENT 1C

LAST CHANCE CANYON ACEC (No. 21)

Proposed Amendment

Adjust boundary to include section 28, T28S, R38E (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

Acceptance of the new boundary will permit increased protection of sensitive cultural resources, including a rock shelter, a quarry, and temporary campsites. These resources are being damaged by recreationists, in spite of the closure of this area to vehicle use by the Interim Management Plan, 1976. This section falls within a recommended wilderness area, WSA 164; incorporation into ACEC 21 will allow added protection until Congressional designation.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

Date

Last Chance Range ACEC 21

- ACEC boundary
- Proposed ACEC extension

AMENDMENT 1D

JAWBONE-BUTTERBREDT ACEC (NO. 20)

Proposed Amendment

Expand ACEC to include land in Cottonwood Creek and Kelso Valley areas.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Reject proposed amendment

Rationale

Land exchanges in the area proposed for addition to the ACEC are planned for the coming year. Expansion of the ACEC to include this land is not appropriate at this time. Following land consolidation, the expansion may be presented for consideration.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

JAWBONE-BUTTERBREAD ACEC 20

AMENDMENT 1d

Original ACEC boundary

Proposed addition

BLM land

Private land

Scale
1:250,000

AMENDMENT 1E

SALE CREEK (DUMONT) ACEC (No. 18)

Proposed Amendment

Adjust boundary to include additional 100 acres in section 19, T18N, R7E, SEM.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The land which will be added contains an old adobe structure and several mines and mine shafts, the remnants of gold mining activity during the last century. These structures have historical importance which closely ties in with several sites located within the original ACEC boundary. Acceptance of the amendment will result in more protective management of the additional historical resources, which will complement the cultural resources already present.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

Date

T119N

AMENDMENT 1e

34

35

36

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10

11

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T118N

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28

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26

SBM
R6E

SALT CREEK ACEC 18

--- Original boundary
— Amended boundary

AMENDMENT 1F

UPPER JOHNSON VALLEY YUCCA RINGS ACEC (No.46)

Proposed Amendment

Adjust boundary to make it legally definable and inclusive of the largest clones and heaviest concentration of yucca rings (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The original boundary was not definable in legal terms. The area is almost completely flat, making it extremely difficult to determine the ACEC boundary on the ground. The new boundary is legally definable and encloses the area containing the largest clones and the heaviest concentration of yucca rings.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

Date

**Upper Johnson Valley
Yucca Rings
ACEC 46**

--- Original boundary
— Amended boundary

AMENDMENT 1G

AMARGOSA CANYON/GRIMSHAW LAKE ACEC (NO. 13)

Proposed Amendment

Modify boundaries and divide ACEC into two ACECs: the Amargosa Canyon Natural Area ACEC and the Grimshaw Lake Natural Area ACEC (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The revised boundaries more correctly reflect areas of highest resource sensitivity and will allow more effective management of those resources. The area will be managed as two separate ACECs rather than as one, because of somewhat differing uses and management prescriptions necessary for each area.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

AMENDMENT 1g

AMENDMENT 1H

WHITEWATER CANYON ACEC (NO. 49)

Proposed Amendment

Adjust boundary to include those portions of T 1 S, R 3 E, sections 19, 20, 29, and 30 not already in the ACEC. Sections 19 and 29 are private land but are planned for acquisition; upon acquisition, they will become part of the ACEC (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The expansion includes a critical winter range area of bighorn sheep. It will provide a mechanism for increased management and cooperation with the adjacent San Bernardino National Forest.

Implementation Needs

None

Grand E. L. ...
District Manager

5/17/85
Date

AMENDMENT 1h

Whitewater Canyon

ACEC 49

AMENDMENT ONE I

BIG MORONGO CANYON ACEC (NO. 50)

Proposed Amendment

Increase size of ACEC from 2695 to 3705 acres (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The revised boundary will include important areas of summer range for the herd of bighorn sheep which range the Little San Bernardino Mountains. It will permit management to correct the degradation of this essential habitat for this BLM sensitive species.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

ACEC 50

AMENDMENT 1J

SALT CREEK PUFFISH/RAIL HABITAT ACEC (NO. 60)

Proposed Amendment

Designate additional scattered parcels of public land as part of the ACEC. Presently, 2,503 acres of scattered tracts of public land have been designated as part of the ACEC; the amendment will incorporate several neighboring parcels (about 2200 acres) into the ACEC.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment with the following modification. Only public lands will be included in the enlarged ACEC (environmentally preferable alternative).

Rationale

Expansion of the Acec boundary should benefit sensitive wildlife species found in this location. These include the desert pupfish, listed as endangered by the State of California, the Yuma Clapper Rail, listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and wildlife Service and rare by the State of California. Acquisition of additional prime habitat on privately owned land may be considered in the future.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

Salt Creek Pupfish/Rail Habitat

AMENDMENT 1j

ACEC 60

AMENDMENT 1K

LAKE CAHUILLA NO. 2 ACEC (NO. 65)

Proposed Amendment

Change management prescriptions restricting mineral extraction and development (Table 15 in Desert Plan) and prohibiting sand and gravel extraction (Appendix IV, Page 49). Remove "x" on Table 15 (in "restrict mineral exploration and development column). Change Appendix IV prescription number five to read "Prohibit sand and gravel extraction except within the East Highline Canal Sand and Gravel Extraction Plan area. Within the Plan area, extraction activities would be guided by the provisions of the management plan."

Other Alternatives Considered

No action (environmentally preferable alternative).

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

This proposal will bring into conformance the recommendations of the CDCA Plan for sand and gravel extraction in ACEC 65 with those of the proposed East Highline Sand and Gravel Extraction Management Plan (EHSGEMP). The Desert Plan disallows extraction within the ACEC. The EHSGEMP sets forth guidelines for extraction in appropriate locations along the East Mesa of Lake Cahuilla, in a manner which would protect sensitive cultural resources. The EHSGEMP is a multi-disciplinary document that includes an analysis of cultural resources as well as wildlife, botanical, and sand and gravel resources. It is based on site-specific inventories which were not feasible in preparing the CDCA Plan.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85
Page

ACEC 65

AMENDMENT 1L

LAKE CAHUILLA NUMBER 5 ACEC (NO. 69)

Proposed Amendment

Change management proscriptions restricting mineral extraction and development (Table 15 in Desert Plan) and prohibiting sand and gravel extraction (Appendix IV, page 51). Remove "x" on Table 15 (in "restrict mineral exploration and development" column). Change Appendix IV prescription number four to read "Prohibit sand and gravel extraction except within the East Highline Sand and Gravel Extraction Management Plan area. Within the Plan area, extraction activities would be guided by the provisions of the management plan.

Other Alternatives Considered

No action (environmentally preferable alternative).

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

This proposal will bring into conformance the recommendations of the CDCA Plan for sand and gravel extraction in ACEC 69 with those of the proposed East Highline Sand and Gravel Extraction Management Plan (EHSGEMP). The Desert Plan disallows extraction within the ACEC. The EHSGEMP sets forth guidelines for extraction in appropriate locations along the East Mesa of Lake Cahuilla, in a manner which would protect sensitive cultural resources. The EHSGEMP is a multi-disciplinary document that includes an analysis of cultural resources as well as wildlife, botanical, and sand and gravel resources. It is based on site-specific inventories which were not feasible in preparing the CDCA Plan.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

ACEC 69

AMENDMENT 1M

PILOT KNOB ACEC (NO. 73)

Proposed Amendment

Delete the western 1,410 acres of this 2,230-acre ACEC. The western border will follow the southern extension of Sidewinder Road. The northern border will abut Pilot Knob.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The boundary of the ACEC will be modified to correspond to actual distribution of cultural resource values. Areas west of the Sidewinder Road extension lack heavily patinated desert pavement surfaces which mark the main areas of concern for this ACEC. Although some cultural resource values are present, they lack the significance of other values associated with this ACEC.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

Pilot Knob ACEC 73

AMENDMENT 1m

Scale 1:24,000

Original boundary

Proposed amended boundary

LTVA/Long-Term Visitor Area

R21E

SBM

AMENDMENT TWO

EDOM HILL/WILLOW HOLE ACEC

Proposed Amendment

Designate approximately 1,760 acres in the Coachella Valley as the Edom Hill/Willow Hole ACEC (environmentally preferable alternative).

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The ACEC will provide protection for the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, the Least Bell's Vireo, and two federal candidate plant species. These sensitive species are being severely threatened by heavy recreational vehicle use in the area.

Implementation Needs

Develop and implement ACEC Management Plan.

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

AMENDMENT 2

Willow Hole/Edom Hill ACEC

AMENDMENT THREE

PATTON'S IRON MOUNTAIN DIVISIONAL CAMP ACEC (NO. 52)

Proposed Amendment

Change the motorized vehicle access designation from "closed" to "limited". Vehicle access will be allowed only on routes to be designated in the ACEC management plan.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action.

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment

Rationale

The boundary fence of the camp and the fenced relief map are a full one-quarter mile within the closed area boundary. Continuing the closed designation would preclude vehicle access to these areas. Changing the designation would permit travel on an approved route to a central entrance area within the old camp. Vehicular access would be provided from a single controlled point on the camp perimeter. Vehicular access is important, as many visitors will be older, and distances between landmarks may be as much as two miles.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

Patton's Iron Mountain Divisional Camp

AMENDMENT 3

ACEC 52

AMENDMENT FOUR
COSO UTILITY CORRIDOR

Proposed Amendment

Establish a one-mile wide, five-mile long utility corridor to connect the Coso Known Geothermal Resource Area with designated Utility Corridor A.

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action (environmentally preferable alternative).

Decision

Accept Proposed Amendment with the modification of adding a small wedge-shaped extension (38 acres) at the south border of the corridor, adjacent to the Naval Weapons Center boundary.

Rationale

A corridor is needed to allow construction of transmission lines of 220 kv or above to transport electrical power from geothermal resources on BLM and Naval Weapons Center lands to powerlines in utility corridor A in Rose Valley. The modification conforms more closely to the natural topographic route out of the Naval Weapons Center. Environmental impacts would be as described in the Draft EA.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85
Date

AMENDMENT 4

POWERLINE CORRIDOR

AREA ADDED SINCE PUBLICATION OF EA

AMENDMENT FIVE

REVISED WORDING IN LIVESTOCK GRAZING ELEMENT

Proposed Amendment

Delete the fifth paragraph of the section titles "Allocations" on page 69 of the Desert Plan and replace it with the following:

"No adjustment was made for precipitation received during the survey period. While above normal in some areas in 1977-1978, it followed several drought years; therefore, plant vigor and density may not be normal. (Active) preference will be determined on the basis of range surveys, monitoring, and known conditions of forage productivity."

Other Alternatives Considered

No Action (environmentally preferable alternative).

Decision

Reject

Rationale

Although plant vigor and density may or may not have been normal in 1977-1978, the Desert Plan surveys were not conducted until early 1979. By then, several years of above normal rainfall had occurred. Thus, no information exists which fundamentally refutes the present wording of the plan, that is, that due to "the above average rainfall...capacity estimates should be considered high."

Interior Department policy now forbids the allocation of forage based on range survey data. Therefore, if the proposal were adopted, monitoring would remain the only one of the criteria proposed by the amendment which could be used to make future adjustments in active preference. This would represent no change from present management under the Desert Plan, which emphasizes monitoring as the means for future adjustments.

It should be noted that since 1979, most allotments have had allotment management plans (AMPs) written and are, or soon will be, managed under those AMPs. It should also be noted that during years of heavy rainfall, the Bureau consistently has made ephemeral forage available on request to operators in excess of perennial preference.

Implementation Needs

None

District Manager

5/17/85

Date

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) on the 1984 Amendments to the California Desert Plan was released for public review on December 12, 1985. The comment period extended to February 11, 1985. Twenty-one letters were received during this period. Oral hearings were not held, but the opportunity to comment was provided at the Desert District Advisory Council meetings in November and February in Lancaster and San Bernardino.

The letters came from the following sources: ten from conservation or wildlife organizations, six from local, state, or Federal agencies (two letters each), three from individuals, one from a utility, and one from a business.

Sixteen of the respondents were located in California, with equal numbers from the northern and southern parts of the state. Two letters came from the neighboring states of Arizona and Nevada, and the others were from Colorado and Washington D.C.

The majority of respondents were in agreement with the Bureau's preferred alternatives on all of the proposed amendments. The principal emphasis was on protection of biological and cultural resources, though a few respondents favored more land for mineral extraction.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY AMENDMENT

AMENDMENT ONE: ACEC BOUNDARIES AND MANAGEMENT

The State of California's Department of Conservation (Division of Mines and Geology) requested more discussion of the impacts of boundary changes on mining and mineral resource conservation and development.

The following units of the amendment were approved by all who mentioned them, but no specific remarks were made.

- A. Eureka Dunes
- C. Last Chance Canyon
- D. Jawbone-Butterbreds

B. DARWIN FALLS

This boundary change was approved by the majority of commenters, although most of them, including the State Department of Fish and Game, wanted assurance that mining operations in the vicinity of Zinc Hill would not adversely affect wildlife or other sensitive resources within Darwin Canyon.

E. SALT CREEK (DUMONT).

The majority of respondents approved the amendment. However, the Goldfields Mining Corporation objected, claiming that mineral exploration would be unduly restricted in an area having gold potential.

F. UPPER JOHNSON VALLEY YUCCA RINGS

This proposal was supported by all who commented on it. One organization wanted restrictions on mining and off road vehicle (ORV) use in the vicinity of yucca rings and a change to Multiple Use Class "L". They argued that unregulated ORV activity, while having little effect on mature yucca plants, could be fatal to young plants, thereby resulting in the death of entire clonal rings as the older plants die.

G. AMARGOSA CANYON/GRIMSHAW LAKE.

The proposed division of this ACEC into two separate ACECs and change in the boundaries were supported by most of those who commented on this amendment. However, two respondents objected to these changes. In addition, the State Department of Fish and Game recommended barriers to motorized vehicle access to the Canyon and assurance that the National Outdoor Coalition's involvement in the Dumont Dunes Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) with the BLM would be consistent with the management philosophy already established for this ACEC.

H. WHITEWATER CANYON

This boundary change was supported by all respondents who commented on it, because of its expected benefit to the bighorn sheep. The change is consistent with the Open Space and Conservation Programs of the General Plan of the County of Riverside.

I. BIG MORONGO CANYON

Approval of this proposal was identical with that for Amendment 1H. Again, the County of Riverside found it to be consistent with their General Plan.

J. SALT CREEK PUFFISH/RAIL HABITAT.

The majority of respondents supported expansion of this ACEC in order to protect the desert pupfish and other rare and endangered wildlife and vegetation. The County of Riverside found the proposal to be consistent with its Open Space and Conservation Map and with its proposed Eastern Coachella Valley Community Plan.

Concern was shown over the large amounts of private land and the geothermal, oil, and gas potential within the expanded boundaries of the ACEC. The Goldfields Mining Corporation suggested purchasing the private land before establishing the ACEC. They agreed with the Bureau's statement that expansion of the ACEC would not interfere with geothermal development. On the other hand, the Yuma Audubon Society recommended withdrawal of desert pupfish habitat and all marsh zones from mineral and energy development.

K & L. LAKE CAHUILLA ACECS 65 AND 69

These proposals were approved by approximately two-thirds of those who commented on them. Two opponents argued that the extraction of sand and gravel within the ACEC was inconsistent with the protection of cultural resources. They said this commodity is widespread and accessible elsewhere.

The Natural Resources Defense Council questioned the legality of developing the East Highline Sand and Gravel Extraction Management Plan while the final Desert Plan (1980) prohibited extraction of sand and gravel within ACECs 65 and 69.

M. PILOT KNOB

Two-thirds of those who mentioned this amendment gave it a blanket endorsement with no comment. Opponents of this boundary change believed that cultural resources within the deleted area west of Sidewinder Road need the protection of ACEC status or, at least, a Class "L" designation. They requested protection from winter visitors and from mineral development.

AMENDMENT TWO: EDOM HILL/WILLOW HOLE ACEC

Two-thirds of all respondents commented on this proposal, and all supported it. The State Department of Fish and Game and the Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve Foundation requested that off-road vehicle use be prohibited within the ACEC. The latter group also proposed that the population of the Coachella Valley Fringe Toed Lizard in wind farm areas should be monitored, and that public access to significant natural areas should be allowed for nonconsumptive recreation. One respondent felt the Environmental Assessment should address the effect of wind energy development on the endangered species present.

AMENDMENT THREE: PATTON'S IRON MOUNTAIN DIVISIONAL CAMP ACEC

Five respondents addressed this proposed amendment - one opposed and the rest in favor. The Ecology Center of Southern California believed that opening the ACEC to restricted vehicle access would allow small dirt motorcycles carried in by recreationists to trespass into closed areas. Another commenter proposed an alternate vehicular access route which would utilize the powerline road and prevent the opening of new roads.

AMENDMENT FOUR: COSO UTILITY CORRIDOR

Four respondents endorsed this amendment with no comment. Two others recommended reducing the width of the corridor to 1/4 to 1/2 mile, saying that a one mile width was excessive. The Sierra Club stated that a ceiling of 200 kv would be appropriate for this geothermal development. Other respondents felt that the treatment of wildlife and visual resources in the Environmental Assessment was inadequate.

AMENDMENT FIVE: GRAZING ELEMENT WORDING CHANGE

All respondents who commented on this proposal agreed that it should be rejected.

The following table lists specific comments, the commenters, and the BLM response. Where other commenters raised the same question, they are identified in parentheses.

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
California Dept. of Fish and Game	<p><u>GENERAL COMMENTS</u></p> <p>DFG also requests that all future documents for the California Desert Conservation Area Amendment process be prepared as EISs as was done for the 1981-1983 amendment process. This would provide a 45-day public review period, as specified in the Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and the State's Office of Planning and Research. Such a review period is highly desirable because it would allow sufficient time to prepare reasoned Department comments on the complex desert area and issues.</p>	<p>The Bureau's environmental review process is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We allowed a 45-day review period on the present Environmental Assessment. The scope of the proposed amendments did not warrant an EIS.</p>
Ted Rado	<p>I am somewhat surprised that this is an EA, especially since prior amendment reviews of almost identical format and scope have been treated as environmental impact statements.</p>	<p>The scope of the 1984 Amendments was narrower than in either 1982 or 1983, both of which contained proposals on wilderness areas, grazing allotments and, in 1982, a major motorcycle race.</p>
California Dept. of Fish & Game	<p>DFG recommends that BLM's wildlife biologists and botanists be included in team assignments evaluating future proposed amendments. This would ensure adequate consideration of proposals that affect desert biological resources, thus greatly aiding in the decision to accept or reject a proposed amendment.</p>	<p>The suggested inclusion of BLM specialists is already in use in the amendment proposal evaluation process.</p>
California Resource Agency	<p>The Department of Conservation (Division of Mines and Geology) comments that altering ACEC boundaries may affect areas currently open to mining. Although the report gives assurances that most of these changes would not adversely affect mining, the data presented to not make it possible to verify this claim. Therefore, the Department recommends that the final report include more discussion of the proposed changes' impacts on mining and mineral resource conversation and development. This discussion should include the information and rationale supporting any conclusions concerning adverse impacts on mining and all references to applicable regulations.</p>	<p>Amendments one, Two and Three concerned ACECs. ACEC designation does not prevent mineral exploration and development. The Draft EA discussed all resources which we found to be affected by a proposed amendment.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Natural Resources Defense Council	<p><u>The Environmental Assessment is too Perfunctory.</u></p> <p>This EA, like the EAs prepared on previous proposed amendments to the Desert Plan, is conclusory and superficial. No alternatives to the proposed amendments, other than rejection, are considered, despite the paramount importance of alternatives to the statutory scheme established by NEPA. See, e.g., 40CFR p 1502.14, 1508.9(b). Additionally, very little quantitative site-specific information or actual analysis is provided to support the document's conclusions. By again taking a pro forma approach to NEPA compliance in connection with amendments to the CDCA Plan, the Bureau would appear to have missed an opportunity to demonstrate that it is, in fact, prepared to take some environmentally responsible actions in the California Desert.</p> <p><u>AMENDMENT ONE - ACEC BOUNDARY AND MANAGEMENT CHANGES</u></p> <p><u>B. Darwin Falls ACEC</u></p> <p>We support the inclusion of China Garden Springs and Miller Springs into the Darwin Falls/Canyon ACEC, but we cannot fully evaluate the impacts of this proposal without more information on the resources of the excluded areas, particularly the Zinc Hill area which may be more subject to mining impacts if removed from the ACEC.</p> <p>DFG could concur with Alternative A as the Preferred Alternative only if future mining activities in the vicinity of Zinc Hill would not adversely impact wildlife or water quality and quantity in Darwin Wash.</p>	<p>As stated on page 3-4 of the draft EA, each of Amendment One's proposed ACEC boundary changes were "based upon detailed study during the preparation of activity plan." The EA summarized the results of those studies. Given the nature of the changes (and the level of detail assessed in previous public studies) we did not feel a greater depth of analysis was warranted in this EA.</p> <p>Amendment Two established an ACEC; alterantive boundaries, if considered, will be studied during the development of the ACEC management plan. Amendments three and four are minor actions; we do not feel that consideration of alternatives was warranted for either of these two, or for Amendment Five.</p> <p>The deleted portion of the ACEC is low in content of the wildlife resources which were the reason for designating this ACEC.</p> <p>The intent of the Management Plan is to withdraw the ACEC from the General Mining Law. Thus, water reserves within the ACEC would not be available for use in mining activities at Zinc Hill.</p>
Yuma Audubon Society		
California Dept. of Fish & Game (Ted Rado) (Doug Prose)		

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Goldfields Mining Corp.	<p><u>E. Salt Creek (Dumont) ACEC</u></p> <p>The presence of several mine shafts and prospect pits attests to the gold potential of the Salt Spring Hills. Including the mine workings into the ACEC would not enhance the value of the ACEC, but would <u>unduly restrict</u> exploration in the area.</p>	<p>ACEC designation does not restrict mineral exploration, although it does require that a plan of operations be submitted and approved prior to any significant surface-disturbing operations. Part of the newly added area has been withdrawn from mining since 1968; it will continue to be withdrawn.</p>
Yuma Audubon Society	<p><u>F. Upper Johnson Valley Yucca Rings</u></p> <p>We support this amendment, but believe additional changes must be made in the management of the ACEC. Specifically, under G.E.M. on page 4-5 of the EA we recommend that "may be" at the end of line 3 be changed to "shall be" to prevent mining impacts to yucca rings. In addition, although unregulated ORV activity probably has little effect on mature yucca plants, soil disturbance and crushing of young plants could prevent the future expansion of existing yucca rings, thereby resulting in the death of entire clonal rings as the older plants die. We believe Class L designation is more appropriate for this area, even if personnel or funding restrictions limit or prevent enforcement presence. Sign posting may be enough to significantly reduce ORV damage in this area.</p>	<p>The Bureau's intent in the GEM section, page 4-5, is that proposed actions will be modified to "avoid specific and highly localized clonal rings." Parts of this ACEC have been fenced and signed to avoid ORV degradation of the oldest and largest yucca clones.</p>
California Dept. of Fish & Game (Ted Rado)	<p><u>G. Amargosa Canyon/Grimshaw Lake</u></p> <p>The Amargosa River/Grimshaw Lake ACEC should be added to the title list on pages 3-2 and 3-3 of the report and should be included in the Final EA.</p>	<p>This was an unintended admission. The following references should be added: CDCA Plan, Tables 2, 15, Maps 3, 4, 17 Appendix AII, pp. 287-289 Appendix C IV, pp 10-11 Mgmt. Plan for Amargosa Canyon ACEC, 1983 Mgmt. Plan for Grimshaw Lake ACEC, 1983</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Ted Rado	<p>I noted the paragraph pertaining to the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC) on the bottom of this page. Given the very consumptive use-oriented slant received by a representative of the group during public review of these plans, I feel that any additional prescriptions developed for this area between BLM and NOC should receive public review through the Desert Plan amendment process prior to their implementation. Any environmental degradation of the area resulting from an ill-planned shift in management philosophy, given the very extreme sensitivity and unique character of resources present here, would have a high probability of inviting stiff opposition from several environmental groups.</p>	<p>The Management Plan for Dumont Dunes will be subject to public comment. All agencies or individuals who have informed the Barstow Resource Area of their interest will receive a copy of the draft. It will be treated as a plan amendment only if a change in management philosophy is proposed.</p>
California Dept. of Fish & Game	<p>All existing barriers to motorized vehicle access must be adequately maintained to prevent unauthorized access. This will be particularly necessary for the fences in the canyon because they are particularly subject to flood damage.</p>	<p>Barriers to motorized vehicles will be maintained as outlined in the Management Plan for Amargosa Canyon Natural Area (Page 16). Management of the ACEC will be under the control of the BLM. Assistance from cooperating agencies will be welcomed.</p>
Yuma Audubon Society	<p>Regarding management of ACEC 13, DFG recommends that the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC) involvement in the Dumont Dunes Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) be restricted to the area covered by the CMA. DFG supports the statement (page 4-6) that Amargosa Canyon is specifically excluded from coverage or involvement under the CMA. Management of the ACEC should be provided by BLM, perhaps with the assistance of cooperating public agencies. This issue should be clarified in the Final EA.</p> <p>We recognize that the Amargosa Canyon and Grimshaw Lake Units of the subject ACEC have different qualities, and therefore may need somewhat different management strategies, but two management plans require more time, money, and paper than one. We don't see why both areas can't be addressed separately in the same plan.</p>	<p>The adjustment in boundaries and the division of the original Amargosa Canyon/Grimshaw Lake ACEC into two separate units were the outcome of studies made during the preparation of the Management Plan for this ACEC. Managing the two ACEC's will require no additional time, personnel or funding than would the single large ACEC.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
	<p>In addition, although in Table 2-1 it is stated "the revised boundaries (would) more correctly reflect areas of highest resource sensitivity", the amendment would remove Tecopa Hot Springs and a portion of the Amargosa River from the ACEC.</p> <p>For the above reasons, Yuma Audubon recommends rejection of this amendment.</p>	
Doug Prose	<p>Reasons for deleting portions of the two ACEC's (proposed) are not stated adequately. Why delete a section of Amargosa Canyon within the original boundaries? Also, it is stated that management of the two areas as one unit would "diffuse" efforts to the detriment of both. However, it is stated that use of the areas is limited to hiking, bird-watching, etc. The area seems small enough, and the use similar enough, to warrant management as only one unit. Reject.</p> <p><u>1J - Salt Creek Pupfish/Rail Habitat</u></p>	<p>Please see preceding response.</p>
Yuma Audubon Society	<p>Expansion of the ACEC would benefit the sensitive biotic resources of this area and we strongly support this change. But these resources are still threatened by potential geothermal, oil, and gas development. As a result, we recommend mineral withdrawal of the proposed critical desert pupfish habitat and all marsh zones.</p>	<p>Under ACEC designation, all mineral exploration and development will require plans of operation. The Bureau will require appropriate techniques for avoidance and mitigation of impacts.</p>
Goldfields Mining Corp.	<p>The large amount of private land within the proposed ACEC would appear to make management of the resources extremely difficult. The BLM should first purchase the property before establishing the ACEC. As stated in the G.E.M. study, the area does have a high geothermal potential, which apparently is not adversely affected by Alternative A.</p>	<p>The Bureau has approved an alternative proposal which would delete privately-owned lands from the ACEC boundary.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Doug Prose	<p><u>1K, 1L - Lake Cahuilla ACECs</u></p> <p>Cultural resources are not explained at all in the document. How can the public make an informed comment on this amendment?</p>	<p>Cultural resources include aboriginal habitation sites along the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahuilla, a large complex site of undisturbed prehistoric human artifacts, and other artifacts. Please see references in Chapter III, Affected Environment, page 3-3.</p>
Ted Rado	<p>I believe that Alternative B should be accepted. Extraction of sand and gravel within the ACEC is inconsistent with the protection of cultural resources. This is a discretionary action by BLM, the commodity is widespread and accessible elsewhere, and extraction will invite secondary impacts associated with increased vehicle access into the ACEC.</p> <p>I recommend Alternative B for the same reasons already provided for 1K.</p>	<p>The EHSCEMP was developed to provide protection for pre-historic resources while allowing the controlled extraction of sand and gravel in this long-used mining area. The mineral found in this area is a concrete aggregate, having a specific chemical composition. It is found only in this part of Imperial County.</p>
Beula Edmiston	<p>Current policy should prohibit sand and gravel extraction within ACECs, and there is no possible mitigation for pre-historic values which would be degraded or destroyed by gravel operations. "NO ADVERSE EFFECT" findings would stretch credibility to the breaking point, and be a disservice to national treasures the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was enacted to protect.</p>	<p>The East Highline Sand and Gravel Extraction Management Plan (EHSCEMP) provides for protection of prehistoric values. Sand and gravel extraction will not be allowed in areas of high sensitivity (Class 1), but will occur only in areas which have been disturbed already (Class 4) or in areas which can be mitigated by data recovery (Classes 2 and 3).</p>
Natural Resources Defense Council	<p>Under the BLM's planning system, final land use plan decisions are supposed to control future management actions, including the development of subsequent, more detailed plans. The final Desert Plan contains a flat prohibition on extraction of sand and gravel within Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) numbered 65 and 69.</p>	<p>The original designation of ACECs in the Desert Plan was based on a large scale survey. When the activity plans were prepared, it was necessary, in several cases, to make adjustments in the boundaries of the ACECs or in management prescriptions, so that the resources for which the ACEC was designated could be managed most effectively. The resulting boundary and management changes are formalized in Amendment One.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
<p>Natural Resources Defense Council (continued)</p>	<p>. . . The EISGEMP is unquestionably a "subsequent more detailed and specific" plan than the CDCA Plan, 43 CFR p 1610.5-3. Instead of its development and contents being constrained by the earlier plan, however, the EISGEMP is concededly "in conflict" with its prohibitions specifically, the EISGEMP would allow, and indeed was developed to allow, mineral extraction to take place in areas where the CDCA Plan prohibited extraction.</p>	<p>The Lake Cahuilla ACEC activity plans were researched currently with a survey of the sand and gravel resources in the area of the East Highline Canal. The Bureau found that sensitive and unique cultural resources within the ACECs could be protected while permitting prudent sand and gravel extraction. The East Highline Sand and Gravel Extraction Management Plan describes the research and resulting guidelines in detail.</p>
	<p>Development of the EISGEMP for these areas is flatly inconsistent with the Bureau's regulatory and statutory authorities. While those authorities as well as the Desert Plan itself authorize plan decisions to be amended, see e.g. Desert Plan p. 124, they do not authorize activity plans to be developed which conflict with constraints imposed by the Plan. Amending the Plan now to conform it to the EISGEMP is the very antithesis of the planning system the BLM's regulations established. We are surprised and disappointed that the Desert District has again stood the Bureau's planning system on its head, by refusing to be constrained by decisions intended to limit the Agency's discretion. We urge that amendments 1K and 1L be rejected in order to restore integrity to planning efforts in the CDCA.</p>	<p>The EISGEMP will not be implemented within the ACECs until the Amendment has been reviewed and approved.</p>
<p>Yuma Audubon Society</p>	<p>M. Pilot Knob</p> <p>We have two concerns in this area which is so close to Yuma. First, we recommend modifying line 2 of page 4-13 to read "Sand, gravel and rock extraction . . ." Secondly, if we read the boundaries correctly, the winter visitors are already slopping over considerably into the existing ACEC. Increased enforcement in this area may be needed to prevent further straying out of the LITVA.</p>	<p>Rock, or rip-rap, extraction occurs north of Pilot Knob, outside the ACEC; it will not be permitted within the ACEC. As stated in the EA, p. 4-12, camping will be prohibited in the ACEC.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Ted Rado	<p>I agree with Alternative A, only if remaining lands outside of the ACEC modified boundaries are designated as Class L. Class M or I lands do not provide sufficient levels of protection for any kind of sensitive resource. ACEC management guidelines supersede class guidelines in the Desert Plan and, as such, are much more protection-oriented.</p>	<p>Site specific surveys made during preparation of the ACEC management plan showed that cultural resources in the deleted area do not warrant either ACEC or Class "L" designation.</p>
Beula Edmiston	<p>While we concur in the urgent need to protect the precious INTAGLIOS on the ancient Colorado River terraces south of Pilot Knob, the deletion of the area west of Sidewinder Road would void protection for significant cultural and historic resources, and should not be allowed. We cannot concur that by protecting the intaglios in the ACEC <u>southern terraces</u> and Pilot Knob fulfills the obligation to the National Historic Preservation Act or the Federal Land Policy and Management Act - to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important and historic or cultural values.</p>	<p>Please see preceding response.</p>
Doug Prose	<p>Cultural resources outside proposed boundary of ACEC are not described adequately, other than saying they are insignificant. Obviously, these other sites are in some way culturally related to the "more important" sites, which should be sufficient reason to include them in the ACEC. Moreover, it is important to have a "buffer zone" of protection around these sites if potential impacts from campers exists. The main reason for redrawing the ACEC boundary appears to be to allow for development of mineral resources-- it is necessary then to keep the area designated as an ACEC and possibly include a plan for careful development, as cultural and recreational resources could be significantly impaired by uncontrolled mineral extraction/exploration.</p>	<p>With respect to cultural resources, please see preceding response. The entire original ACEC is under a first form withdrawal by the Bureau of Reclamation, which precludes the possibility of locating any new mineral claims. Saleable minerals, including sand, gravel, and rip-rap are administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management. Mining of these resources would require inventory of cultural resources and appropriate mitigation measures.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
	<u>AMENDMENT TWO</u>	
California Dept. of Fish and Game	<p>DFG supports establishing the Edon Hill/Willow Hole ACEC. The area is important habitat for the endangered Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard and the least Bell's vireo. This ACEC could become essential to the long-term survival of these species as the Coachella Valley urbanizes. DFG requests that BLM prohibit off-road vehicle use within the ACEC.</p>	<p>The ACEC Management Plan will prohibit recreational off-road vehicle use in the ACEC.</p>
County of Riverside Planning Department	<p>The Habitat Conservation Plan for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard states that the proposed Willow Hole/Edon Hill ACEC will contain 2,469 acres. Page 2-6 of the Desert Plan states that approximately 2,000 acres have been designated for this ACEC and page 3-6 states that the ACEC encompasses 1,766 acres. We are enclosing copies from the HCP for your review.</p>	<p>Both figures in the draft EA were estimates. The exact area of public land in the ACEC according to the Habitat Conservation Plan is 1,695 acres. The remainder of the 2,469 total acres is privately-owned land which the Bureau hopes to purchase.</p>
Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve Foundation	<p>In summary we concur with the Bureau that Amendment 2 should be adopted and we recommend that the Management Plan for the ACEC include the following: 1) public access to significant natural areas for nonconsumptive recreation; 2) a strong law enforcement presence to patrol and exclude off-road vehicles; 3) a biological research and monitoring plan to evaluate the population status and trends of the CVFTL in wind farm areas.</p>	<p>All of these suggestions will be considered in preparing the Management Plan. (1) In determining public access, safety factors at wind turbines must be considered; (2) off-road vehicle access will be prohibited; (3) monitoring will be done on the effect of wind turbines on CVFTL in the local area.</p>
Doug Prose	<p>How can the leasing of this area for wind energy development not be detrimental to the endangered species present? I know this amendment does not address this issue directly, but it should be considered in the ACEC Management Plan. The establishment of a wind energy park, with the extensive network of roads and turbine foundations that accompany, has to be at least as detrimental to <u>any</u> species habitat as ORV use, if not more so in this case.</p>	<p>Wind turbines are being located to avoid habitat of sensitive species. The additional security needed to protect wind apparatus will aid in preventing off-road vehicle use in habitat areas.</p>

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
	<u>AMENDMENT TWO (continued)</u>	
California Dept. of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology	The Department (Division of Mines and Geology) also recommends that the final report include a more complete analysis of Amendment 2 (Willow Hole/Edom Hill ACEC) for potential impact on mineral exploration and mining.	The area has potential for oil, gas, and geothermal resources and low potential for locatable metallic and non-metallic minerals. It may contain large volumes of high quality sand and gravel of the type that is widespread throughout the Indio Hills. Prohibiting future sales of sand and gravel in the ACEC is not expected to impact the supplies of that resource in the region.
Donald W. Thomson	I recommend that you set aside additional habitat for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard (Uma inornata) in Amendment 2. I would recommend areas like section 3 (refer to map A-14). There are also areas near Dillon road near the Fargo Canyon turnoff (about 5 miles east of Indio), where Uma inornata can be found, but off the road vehicles are destroying them and the dunes in that area.	The area encompassed within the ACEC boundary was identified through a cooperative Federal and local program for conservation of the Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard. Participating in this study were representatives of Riverside County, several cities, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Agua Caliente Tribe, local development interests, conservation groups and scientists. The consensus of this group was that other locations which were considered were less vital in assuring the continued existence of this endangered species.
	<u>AMENDMENT THREE</u>	
Doug Prose	Vehicular access to Camp Iron Mountain does not have to be as extensive as proposed in order to accomplish the stated goal of providing access to senior citizens. Two roads leading off of the powerline road (see map below) can take care of this. Opening up the proposed roads will ensure that these roads become devoid of vegetation - there is in fact a good deal of vegetation in the portions of camp roads not recently impacted by visitors. Furthermore, the nature of the soils at this site will cause these roads to be passable only to 4wd's most of the year, so that most visitors will be forced to use the powerline road for access. Off-road activity will be increased with greater access at the site.	In order to use the powerline road, visitors would have to drive to the Iron Mountain pumping plant on an existing paved road and then across the aqueduct to the powerline road. The Metropolitan Water District prefers that the public not use this route, since increased traffic, particularly by heavy vehicles could be hazardous to the aqueduct. Approaching the Camp from the south along the powerline road is not a feasible alternative, since this road is not always passable to two-wheel drive vehicles. The Bureau found that the best solution was access from Highway 62 along a former roadway.

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Ted Rado	<p><u>AMENDMENT THREE (continued)</u></p> <p>I agree with Alternative A only on two conditions: (1) routes are located to prevent disturbance to sensitive cultural or wildlife resources; and (2) the route review process involves public comment.</p>	<p>The routes shown on the map on page A-15 will not disturb sensitive cultural or wildlife resources. These routes were included in the route designation process, which ended in late February, 1985. Maps of all routes were sent to about 1300 people for a 45-day review.</p>
Sierra Club	<p>However, we must support Alternative B rejecting Amendment 3, Patton's Iron Mountain Divisional Camp, Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) No. 52, as changing the motorized vehicle access designation from "closed" to "limited" will encourage opportunities for further irreparable destruction of the ecosystem. Not only will road-improvement construction lead to further destruction of the ecosystem, but the small dirt motorcycles carried in by truck and motorcycle will inevitably find their way onto "protected" wilderness once past the single vehicle-access control point on the camp perimeter.</p> <p><u>AMENDMENT FOUR</u></p>	<p>All of the proposed routes are already in existence (see preceding response). The road from Highway 62 to the fenced area will be improved to accommodate 2-wheel drive cars. The off-road use of motorcycles or other 4WD vehicles will be prohibited.</p>
Ted Rado	<p>I recommend a modified Alternative C; establish a one-quarter mile wide, five-mile long corridor. A one-mile corridor is far wider than what is needed to accommodate the proposed utility line. The area already has recognized sensitive cultural and wildlife resources.</p>	<p>The Bureau believes that a one-mile corridor allows more flexibility in identifying appropriate locations for a right-of-way. Detailed inventory of cultural resources, wildlife and other resources will be done when a right-of-way is needed.</p>
California Native Plant Society, Bristlecone Chapter	<p>We believe, however, that a 1/2 mile-wide utility corridor near Oso Hot Springs would be ample width, and so recommend.</p>	

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
Sierra Club	<p><u>AMENDMENT FOUR (continued)</u></p> <p>Concerning the utility corridor to the Oso Hot Springs KGRA, we think it would be appropriate to "generate cultural resource data concerning this amendment," and historical values in the area which might be impacted if due care is not exercised in the placement of towers, construction roads, etc.</p> <p>The voltages to be allowed in the utility corridor are excessive. The Geysers area in northern California is only now considering a 230 kV line, and it has the largest geothermal development in the world. In order to utilize a utility line above 200 kV any energy developer would have to wipe out the entire Oso Hot Springs area and a fair amount of land to the west of the Oso Range as well. Voltages above 200 kV are only used for long distance transmission, which according to the material submitted, this is not. We think that it is more appropriate to establish a ceiling of 200 kV. more appropriate to establish a ceiling of 200 kV.</p> <p><u>AMENDMENT FIVE</u></p> <p>I. The Amendment Process Lacks Integrity.</p> <p>The EA sets forth five (5) criteria ostensibly used by the Bureau in determining which amendments to consider in this latest round of revisions to the Plan... At least one of the amendments being considered this time - amendment 5 - patently fails to satisfy any of the criteria.</p> <p>Even assuming that the proponent is correct in alleging that "several allotments... were unnecessarily penalized by not being allowed warranted increases," (pp. 2-7 to 2-8), clearly there is no "absolute need" for this amendment to be considered and decided</p>	<p>Specific cultural resources data will be developed when a right-of-way is applied for.</p> <p>A ceiling of 200 kV on transmission lines would still require a utility corridor. It seems reasonable to expect that the energy producer would construct a line which would satisfy only the needs of his energy sources.</p>
Natural Resources Defense Council		Comment is noted.

Specific Comments and Responses

Commenter	Comment	Response
<p>Natural Resources Defense Council (continued)</p>	<p><u>AMENDMENT FIVE (continued)</u></p> <p>upon now - some four years after this result occurred...Equally obviously, the proposal was not based on "new data." p.1-1. On the contrary, it consists basically of a new or different interpretation of the data the ELM used in developing the Desert Plan. p.3-9..In like manner, the proposed amendment does not "represent a change in legal or statutory mandate," or in "state or local government or agency plan." p.1-1. Finally, the proposal - at least as described in Table 2-1 - lacks sufficient detail, such as identification of the "penalized" allotments and descriptions of the allegedly warranted increases. Even assuming that the actual proposal was far more detailed, it is obvious from Table B-1, "amendments not accepted for consideration," that detail is not all that it takes to get an amendment considered.</p> <p>Ignoring the criteria adopted for judging proposed amendments seriously undermines the amendment process, and wastes the Bureau's severely limited funds as well as the time of the general public.</p> <p>All of this is particularly true in the case of amendment 5, which, the EA reveals, is not based on data that would "refute" the plan, p. 4-17, is not necessary to remedy the alleged problem and, most importantly, would produce "no change from present management under the Desert Plan." Id. Thus, while we strongly support rejection of this amendment, the Bdureau's preferred alternative, we believe it clearly should never have been considered in the first place, thereby saving time, expense, and inconvenience for us all. Cf. p. 4-4.</p>	<p>Comment is noted.</p>

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