



Decision Notice
and Finding of No Significant Impact
FLETCHER VIEW/KYLE RV IMPROVEMENTS

USDA Forest Service
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, Humboldt-Toiyabe
National Forest
Clark County, Nevada
T. 19 S., R. 57 E., Sec 29 and 32

Background

The proposed action for the Fletcher View Campground (see Map 1) includes the removal of the existing vault toilets and replacing them with a building containing two flush toilet units and showers. This building and the facilities within would be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities, and to be energy and water efficient. Related actions to this renovation project include updating the plumbing system to meet the needs of the facility (i.e. frost free hydrants), and installation of a sewer line routed between the Fletcher View Campground and a new leach field located east of the storage area at the Kyle Canyon Guard Station.

A new trail would be constructed on top of the area disturbed by the installation of the sewer line between the Fletcher View Campground and the Kyle Canyon Visitor Center. Interpretive signs are to be installed along the trail, and user defined trails running parallel to the new trail will be restored. All areas disturbed during construction will be graded, seeded, and mulched as needed to return areas to a vegetated state and prevent the establishment of noxious weeds.

The proposed action for the Kyle RV area is to provide accessible amenities to RV campers by paving and designating five RV parking spurs, and installing a two riser flush toilet with one frost free hydrant. Associated actions to these activities include installing sewer lines and associated plumbing to support a flush system, installing picnic tables and benches, installing one communal fire pit, installing one dumpster pad, and installing signing to protect sensitive species and reduce the potential for continued soil erosion associated with human activity, and installing one 3-panel information kiosk with self-serve fee station. Interpretive signs would be placed at key locations at the site informing visitors of sensitive species located around the campground and the associated impacts of continued soil erosion from hill climbing. Post-construction activity will include grading, seeding, and mulching as needed to return disturbed areas to a vegetated state and prevent the establishment of noxious weeds.



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The proposed project is partially located within the 232.6 acre Middle Kyle Canyon High Priority Biodiversity Hot Spot as identified within the Conservation Agreement (CA). The CA and Forest Plan directs avoidance of species of concern and their habitats within these areas, which were defined in the Nature Conservancy Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Biodiversity Hotspots and Management Recommendations (1994) document.

Presently the hotspot, including the area around Kyle RV and Fletcher View Campground, is being impacted by recreational activities.



At the Fletcher View Campground one Rough Angelica (*Angelica scabrida*) plant grows within the 3-acre campground site and about six other plants grow in the adjacent wash and woodlands. A population of Forest sensitive plants, *Astragalus aequalis*, is located in the vicinity of the proposed Kyle RV Campground. Its habitat has been negatively affected by recreational use in the area. Soil erosion has resulted from people climbing up the slopes that are immediately adjacent to this location.

Currently Fletcher View Campground (12 camp sites) is the only campground in Kyle Canyon where RVs can park and camp. Toilet and shower facilities were not improved during the recent campground upgrade but the toilet facilities at Fletcher View Campground are inadequate, inaccessible, and in need of repair. There are no shower facilities presently available at these facilities. The Kyle RV site is minimally developed and is currently used as overflow RV camping when the Fletcher View Campground is full. The 1/3 acre site has recently been graveled and gated but there are no defined campsites, tables, fire rings, grills or restrooms. Forest Service personnel have observed that there is a growing need for additional RV campsites, especially on weekends.

There is no designated route for pedestrians to cross from Fletcher View Campground to the Kyle Canyon Visitor Center (see map). Pedestrian access is along a system of user defined trails that generally follow drainage channels and the utility corridor. User defined trails have the potential to impact sensitive species known to exist in the area.

The environmental assessment (EA) documents the analysis of this alternative to meet this need.

Decision

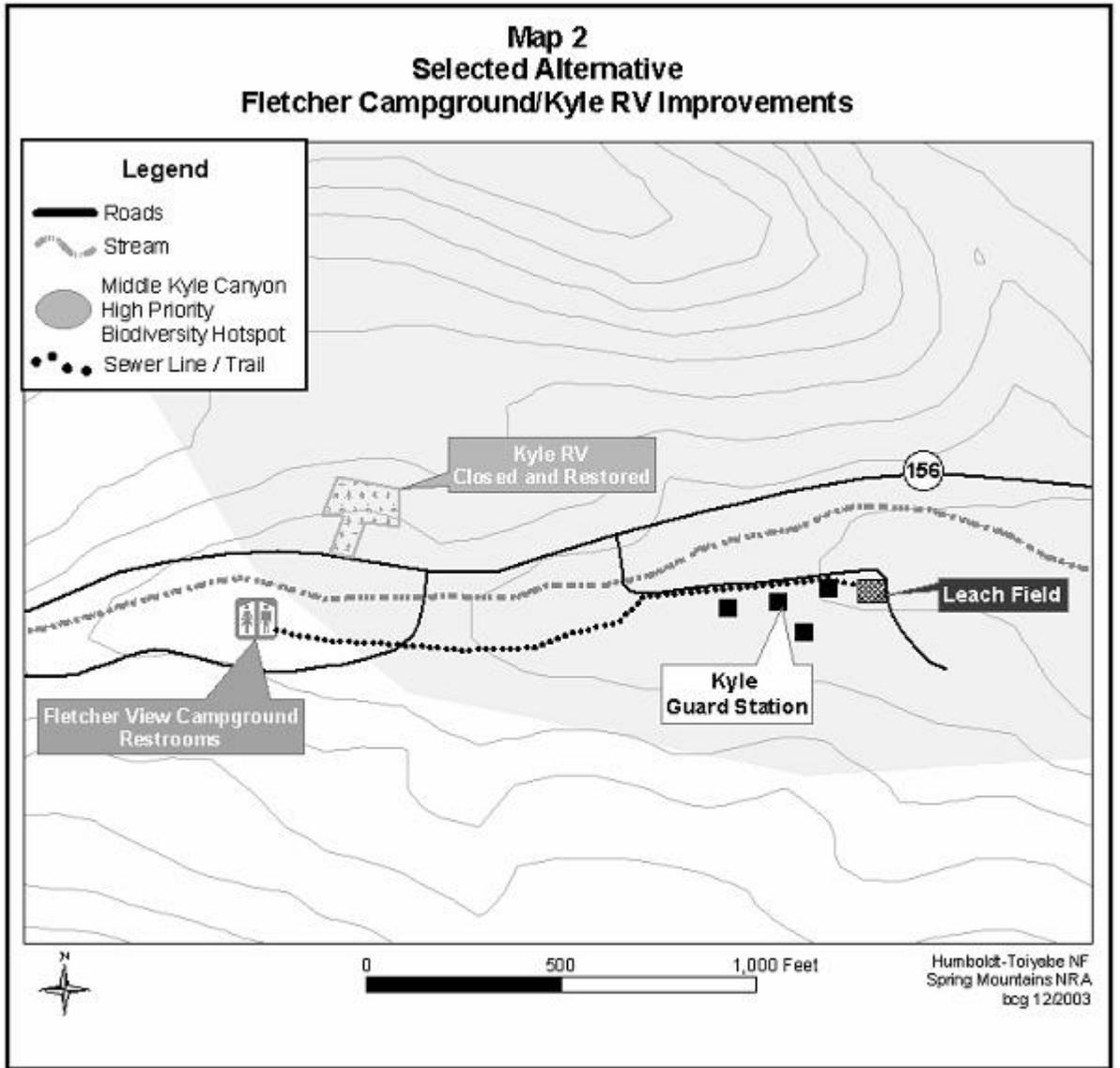
Based upon my review of all alternatives and knowledge of the effects, I have decided to implement the Alternative Action to the proposed action (see Map 2). This alternative removes the existing vault toilet at Fletcher View Campground and replaces it with a building containing two flush toilet units and showers. These improvements will be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities, to be energy and water efficient using low flow technologies in both the flush toilets and shower facilities, and to blend into the surrounding environment by using materials, colors, and textures that mimic those in the natural surroundings of the project.

Related actions to this renovation project include updating the plumbing system to meet the needs of the facility (i.e. frost free hydrants), installation of a sewer line routed between the Fletcher View Campground and a new leach field located in the storage area, or boneyard, at the Kyle Canyon Visitor Center at least 50 feet from the Kyle Canyon Wash. The leach field capacity is to meet the current and anticipated use at the Fletcher Campground. On top of the sewer line a new trail would be constructed to connect the Fletcher View Campground and the Kyle Canyon Visitor Center. Any trees that are removed to accommodate the sewer line installation shall be used either along the wash or at Kyle RV during the restoration work as cover habitat. Interpretive signs are to be installed along the trail, and user defined trails running parallel to the new trail will be restored or reclaimed. All areas disturbed during construction will be graded, seeded, and mulched as needed to return areas to a vegetated state and prevent the



establishment of noxious weeds. User defined trails between the Visitor Center and Fletcher View Campground will be closed and vegetated. I also expect the

The Interdisciplinary team is to be involved in the layout of the sewer line and trail to between the Fletcher View Campground and the Kyle Canyon Visitor Canter to avoid impacts to sensitive species habitat to the greatest extent possible.





Also, as part of the **Alternative Action to the Proposed Action** the Kyle Canyon Recreational Vehicle Site will be closed and completely rehabilitated as close as possible to a condition that mimics neighboring undisturbed areas in the vicinity. Actions would include removing the gravel surface material, ripping, seeding, and mulching the area to near original contour and condition, removing the fence protecting the hillside and sensitive plants, and ripping, seeding, and mulching the driveway into the existing parking area. The gate would remain in place until monitoring indicates that revegetation of the area has been effective. At that time the gate would be removed and replaced with boulders to prevent vehicles from driving in the restored area. The Forest and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will work cooperatively to develop restoration plans, identify seed mixes, and plant lists to be used when restoring Kyle RV, areas disturbed during construction, and the Kyle Canyon Visitor Center.

Mitigations and Monitoring

The Forest Service uses mitigation and monitoring through its planning and implementation of land management activities and by consultation with FWS and other parties. The application of these measures begins during the planning and design phases of a project. These measures come from or link to the Forest Plan and continue through all phases of subsequent management related to the project. These measures are described below.

Wildlife

- Flammulated owls and neotropical migratory birds may be impacted by proposed activities during construction. A limited construction period of March 1– July 15 is recommended for proposed project activities. If these dates can not be avoided nest surveys for these species would be conducted and all nests located avoided until fledging occurs. The Spring Mountain NRA staff biologist will be consulted to determine the appropriate distance for avoidance of occupied nests.
- Avoid impact to Palmer’s Chipmunk populations and habitat by minimizing removal of understory vegetation and large woody debris (see “Covered Species” Report).
- Butterflies utilize puddles formed in the area after rainfall. Where possible, avoid puddles in or near the wash. (see “Covered Species” Report).
- Avoid rubber rabbitbrush and lupines where possible during sewer line installation and trail reconstruction between Fletcher View Campground and the Visitor Center in order to avoid effects upon butterfly host plants (see “Covered Species Report”).

Sensitive Plants

- Take appropriate measures, (fencing, signing, environmental education, etc.) to avoid impacts to sensitive species habitat and populations.
- Where construction enters into natural areas, flag the perimeter within which any construction is to be conducted in order to minimize the area of disturbance. Include enough area to provide for ancillary construction activities (i.e. materials storage, slash piles, etc.).



- Establish baseline inventory data for sensitive plant and animal species to use while monitoring the effects of year round use. This data would be used to establish a threshold for restoration, protection, or restriction of use areas in order to protect sensitive plant and animal populations.
- Fence areas along SR-157 where user defined trails are cutting through the wash and vegetation. Utilize fencing, where appropriate to restrict footpath traffic between the campground and visitor center.

Soil and Water

- Best Management Practices (BMPs) (FSH 2509.22) will be used in all alternatives where ground-disturbing activities occur. BMPs and other mitigation measures will be applied to protect soil, water, and vegetation resources where construction activities would occur in sensitive areas. The BMPs will be described for site-specific conditions within the erosion and drainage control plan developed prior to project construction and in consultation with permitting agencies.
- **Monitor the Kyle RV and other disturbed areas annually until vegetation on the disturbed areas has become established. Replant or seed as needed until the desired cover condition as defined in the restoration plan is achieved.**
- The trail would be designed as far from Kyle Canyon wash as possible, and engineered to minimize or eliminate erosion effects from any secondary draw crossing the proposed path. Utilize interdisciplinary Team Approach to sight trail and sewer line layout.

Water Conservation

- During periods of extreme drought, as defined by the Kyle Canyon Water District, water supplies to the showers will be turned off to conserve water.

Noxious Weeds

- Develop a noxious weed plan as part of the design phase of the project This plan will include the monitoring and maintenance of noxious weeds at all planting locations and a list of measures to be taken during construction to limit the spread noxious weeds.

Reason for Decision

After consideration of the issues defined in the Fletcher View/Kyle Canyon RV Environmental Assessment (EA) I have selected this alternative because it provides the most protection of sensitive species habitat at the Kyle RV site improves the facilities at the Fletcher View Campground and improves visitor safety along State Road 157.



The analysis in the EA, regarding sensitive species and Biodiversity Hotspots pointed out the importance of protecting habitat of the endemic plant species' in Kyle Canyon. Protection of the habitat in and adjacent to the Kyle RV site is much more important when compared to the potential benefit of an additional five RV camping spaces. Closing this site will help keep people off of the sensitive species habitat adjacent to the site. By moving the camping activity away from this area and restoring it to as near natural conditions as possible it is my hope that the habitat in the area will improve with time and the populations that have already been impacted will rebound. Actively restoring the site will speed this process along and monitoring this effort for restoration success will improve our skill base for similar activities in the future.

Improving the existing facilities at the Fletcher View Campground is also very important. This site has been in existence since the 1960s. While there has been some renovation over the years with the placement of the current vault toilets and improvement of the campsites these structures do not currently meet the needs of the Forest or the Forest Visitors. Modernizing this facility will make the visitor experience much more enjoyable. With the addition of the new interpretive trail the Forest will be able to share what we have learned about the unique environment of the Spring Mountains with the public.

Finally, I believe that there is a safety issue related to the placement of the Kyle RV site opposite of the Fletcher View Campground and closing Kyle RV, even to temporary use will eliminate that issue. SR-157 is a busy highway and having two sites located so close together results in visitors crossing the highway. Regardless of how many people cross the road there is a potential for a serious accident involving a pedestrian and a motor vehicle. This potential concerns me and I feel it is my duty to protect forest users from this type of

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered two other alternatives. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the Environmental Analysis (EA) on pages [17-19].

No Action

Under this alternative no improvements would be done in Fletcher View Campground or in Kyle Canyon RV site. Kyle RV would continue to operate as an overflow site without toilet facilities, the site use would not be maximized to full use potential because parking spaces would not be designated, no winter recreation opportunity would be provided at either the Fletcher View Campground or Kyle RV, and no interpretation signs would be installed.

Specifically, for Fletcher View campground, toilet facilities would remain inaccessible to people with disabilities. As a result, a portion of our customers would not be able to use these facilities.

For Kyle RV site, the site would remain as is. Hillside erosion would continue to occur. Soil displacement and surface erosion from the site would continue to occur. Damage to the Biodiversity Hotspot, Clokey's Milkvetch, Palmer's chipmunk, and butterfly habitats would continue to be at risk from human activity (EA, page 8).



Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes the improvements at Fletcher View Campground, the trail to the Visitor Center, and the restoration work to be conducted on user defined trails in the Kyle Canyon Wash as described above.

The difference between the Proposed Action and the Alternative Action is in the development of the Kyle RV site. In this alternative the Kyle RV would be improved by paving the parking area and designating five RV parking spurs, and installing a two riser flush comfort station with one frost free hydrant (EA page 8).

Under this Alternative hillside erosion and associated impacts to the sensitive plant populations and habitat would continue to occur and damage to the Biodiversity Hotspot, Clokey's Milkvetch, Palmer's chipmunk, and butterfly habitats would continue to be at risk from human activity.

Public Involvement

On July 16, 2002 a scoping document was mailed to a mailing list of 703 individuals, organizations, and agencies that have an interest in the Spring Mountains NRA. A summary of the project has also been included in the Schedule of Proposed Actions, published quarterly by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and mailed to the Forest mailing list in each edition since the scoping period began in July 2002. Sixteen individuals, organizations, and agencies responded to the scoping document and their comments have been used to identify the issues and develop the Alternative Action described below.

Documents pertaining to this project are available for review at the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area district office, located at 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89130.

Using the comments from the public, agencies, the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiutes, and the Pahrump Band of Paiutes (see Issues section), the responsible official identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. Main issues of concern included:

Kyle RV is located across SR-157 from the Fletcher View Campground. There are no amenities at the Kyle RV location and users at Kyle RV may cross the highway to take advantage of the amenities in the Fletcher View Campground. Replacing the existing restroom facilities and adding showers will add to the attraction in that camp for people staying at the Kyle RV Camp. Improving the conditions at Kyle RV by paving, adding restrooms, interpretive material, and picnic facilities will result in that area being open for RV use year round. All of these will result in more people crossing SR-157 increasing the risk of pedestrian and vehicle accidents.



Both Fletcher View Campground and Kyle RV are identified in the Conservation Agreement (CA) as impacting the Middle Kyle Canyon High Priority Biological Hotspot and its species of concern. Presently, Forest Plan direction is to direct recreation away from impacting these areas and their species. Fletcher View Campground has had a long history of developed recreational use dating from 1963. Kyle RV has, in the past only been used as overflow camping when Fletcher View Campground has been full, thereby limiting the impact to the site to brief periods. Improving the facilities at the Fletcher View Campground and the Kyle RV site would increase the use and thereby increase the impact within this biodiversity hotspot. Impacts to the Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and Forest Service sensitive species of concern, such as Palmer’s chipmunk, butterflies, flammulated owl and sensitive species of concern plants would be expected (see EA pages 6-8).

To address these concerns, the Forest Service created the alternatives described above.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.

Beneficial	Adverse
Restroom facilities upgraded at Fletcher View to provide accessibility to people with disabilities	Kyle RV in questionable location for developed recreation site.
Restrooms at Fletcher View upgraded to provide flush toilets	Barriers and interpretive signs will not mitigate all impacts to sensitive species or habitat at Kyle RV. Some impacts will continue to occur.
Restrooms at Fletcher View upgraded to provide showers.	Visitors will still need to cross SR-157 to access amenities at Fletcher View and Kyle Visitor Center posing safety hazard.
5 RV Spaces paved and marked at Kyle RV	Erosion on hill slope will continue albeit to a lesser degree.
Barriers and interpretive signs placed at Kyle RV to limit impact to sensitive species habitat.	Increased recreation has the potential to affect species of concern habitat.
Toilet, picnic tables, grills installed at Kyle RV to improve experience.	Increased activity has the potential to affect species of concern habitat.
Both sites open year round to provide recreation experience.	Increased recreation has the potential to affect species of concern habitat.



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2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety, because the risk to public safety is significantly reduced by selection of the Alternative Action to the Proposed Action. Improving the comfort station at Fletcher View Campground and providing water will improve sanitation at the site. Closing the Kyle RV site will eliminate the need for visitors in the canyon to cross SR 157 at this location (see EA pages 11).
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area, because both the Kyle RV and Fletcher View Campground have been in use as developed recreation sites since 1963, and the Spring Mountains were designated as a National Recreation Area in 1993. In an agreement with Clark County and FWS, much of the affected area has been designated as a high priority biodiversity hotspot and has been managed in accordance with recommendations as set forth in the CA since 1998. By closing the Kyle RV site and protecting the habitat in that area the Forest will be meeting the intent of the Conservation Agreement by protecting sensitive plant populations and habitat (see EA pages 12).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. Because there is no known scientific controversy among the experts over the impacts of the project (see EA pages 12-13). All inventories and analysis for this project has been conducted and prepared using methods commonly accepted in the scientific community.
5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 11-17).
6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because it is a stand alone decision and as such is not dependent on past or future projects. Further this project and decision do not obligate analysis or considerations of resources in future projects or adjacent areas.
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (see EA pages 17).
8. The action will have no adverse effects on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because where the project passes near the Kyle Canyon Guard Station construction activities are confined to the roadway in front of the site. (see EA pages 16). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources; because no resources of this nature were located within the project boundaries (see EA pages 16).
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973, because there are none (see EA pages 12-15; BE, USFWS 2003).



10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (see EA pages 2-6). The action is consistent with the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended (See EA pages 2-6).

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision to improve the Fletcher View Campground by removing the existing vault toilet and constructing a new unit with flush toilets and showers and closing the Kyle RV campground and reclaiming it to protect sensitive species habitat is consistent with the intent of the forest plan's long term goals and objectives listed on pages 5-6. The project was designed in conformance with land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan guidelines for:

Resources

- Sensitive plant and wildlife species are protected. (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement and MSHCP).
- Areas with high biodiversity and/or a number of species of concern called “biodiversity hotspots” are protected (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement and MSHCP).
- Native and desired non-native animal populations are maintained at sustainable levels. Management Indicator Species are monitored to indicate the success of management (Forest Plan and CA).
- Minimal soil erosion and compaction result from recreation and other uses on the Spring Mountains NRA (Forest Plan).

Recreation Needs

- Increase recreation opportunities (Forest Plan).
- Improve facilities for resource management, health and safety (Forest Plan).

Social Setting

- Information is provided to the public on how to recreate without impacting sensitive plant and animal species (Forest Plan, Conservation Agreement and MSHCP).

Executive Order 12898, dated February 11, 1994 establishes the requirements to address environmental justice concerns within the context to agency operations. As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, agencies are required to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income communities.

The improvement of Fletcher View and closing Kyle RV and restoring the area to a native vegetative state would not have a disproportionate effect on minority and low income communities. Every group would be equally affected by the proposed action.



Implementation Date

This project will be implemented on or after February 15, 2004.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR part 215.11. Individuals or organizations that submitted substantive comments during the comment period may appeal this decision. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14, as published in the Federal Register on June 4, 2003.

As the Responsible Official, District Ranger Steve Holdsambeck signed a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on December 12, 2004 approving the Fletcher View Kyle RV Improvements Project. The selected alternative includes improving the Fletcher View Campground and restoring the Kyle RV site in the middle Kyle Canyon Area of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Copies of the Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice/FONSI are available at the Spring Mountain National Recreation Area Office, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada 89130, <http://www.fs.fed.us/htnf/>.

Decision Subject to Appeal

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer. Written comments must be submitted to: Appeal Deciding Officer, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401; phone: (435) 896-9233, fax: (801) 625-5277; e-mail: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Electronic appeals must be submitted in MS Word (*.doc) or rich text format (*.rtf). The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays. The appeal must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic appeals.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the Las Vegas Review Journal, the newspaper of record. The publication date in the Las Vegas Review Journal, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Individuals or organizations who submitted substantive comments during the comment period specified at 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.



Implementation of Decision

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact James Winfrey, Project Coordinator, Spring Mountain National Recreation Area, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada 89130, <http://www.fs.fed.us/htnf/> (702) 839-5560.

/s/ Steve Holdsambeck

12/12/03

STEVE HOLDSAMBECK
District Ranger
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area

Date

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