

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
HOLLISTER FIELD OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

1. **CONTROL NUMBER:** CA-190-EA04-06
2. **CASE FILE/SERIAL NUMBER:** CA-190-SR04-01
3. **PROPONENT:** Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club, Inc.
4. **PROJECT:** 2004 Quicksilver Enduro
5. **LOCATION:** Clear Creek Management Area, Portions of T. 18 S., R. 11 E., R. 12 E., MBDM
6. **AFFECTED ACREAGE:** Course is 112 miles in length on public lands, 25 acres
7. **7.5' QUADRANGLE:** Santa Rita Peak, San Benito Mountain, Idria
8. **MULTIPLE-USE CLASS:** Limited Use Area
9. **LAND STATUS:** Public
10. **SPECIAL DESIGNATION AREA:** San Benito Mountain Research Natural Area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern/ACEC, Serpentine ACEC *Camissonia benitensis* critical habitat
11. **AUTHORITY:** 16 United States Codes (U.S.C.) 670g-n, 1241-1249, 1271-1287, and 4601-6a; and 43 U.S.C. 1181a, 1201, and 1701 et seq.
12. **LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE:** This plan has been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms to the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

Name of Plan

Hollister RMP
Clear Creek Activity Plan
Clear Creek RMP Amendment and EIS

Date Approved

August 1984, as amended
1986
January 1999

13. NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:

The Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club has submitted a Special Recreation Application and Permit to conduct a competitive, nationally recognized motorcycle endurance race on public lands. The event requires special use authorization from the Bureau of Land Management, and as such requires additional environmental review prior to authorization.

14. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

14.1 Proposed Action:

Activities

On Sunday, February 15, 2004, the Salinas Ramblers are proposing to conduct a national enduro motorcycle race in the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA). This event is similar to events that have been permitted in the CCMA for 32 years. In previous years, this event has attracted anywhere from 250 to 600 participants. The average number of participants is 425. There were 257 participants in the 2003 event. The 2004 proposed race would begin and end on the Salinas Ramblers property which is adjacent to the CCMA. Participants and spectators would camp and stage activities at the Salinas Ramblers property. Camping would occur on less than one-half acre of BLM land adjacent to the Salinas Ramblers' property (See Exhibit A). The area has been flagged and defined to prevent parking adjacent to the river. The race would begin and end on Sunday, February 15, 2004.

Participants would arrive on the Friday and Saturday before the event and depart by Monday, February 16, 2004. Rambler crews would clean the camping area on Monday.

The event would be cancelled if the Bureau of Land Management determines the road conditions in the CCMA are too dry or too wet.

Course

Riders would traverse the course individually, staging from the Ramblers property. Riders would start four to a minute. Three loops totaling 112 miles are proposed on both public and private lands. Loop 1 would be 44.3 miles long. Loop 2 would be 38.8 miles long. Loop 3 would be 28.9 miles long. Loops are designed to meet a variety of skill levels. Participants would begin the ride with loop 1 and return back to the Salinas Rambler's property and gas up before returning to ride the next loop. The course would be located along routes open for off-highway

vehicle (OHV) use. Exhibit A depicts the three loops included in the entire course. Gas pit stops would be located on the Salinas Ramblers property. At the sign-in/scoring tent there will be a map showing the checkpoint locations plus the location of jeeps with radio communications.

There would be fifteen checkpoints, one of which is located on private land, along the three loops which are shown on Exhibit A. At checkpoints, participants would receive a score written on a card that the rider carries. They would also be able to check their time against official race clocks monitored by the event sponsors. A minimum of one member of the Ramblers club would be stationed at each of these checkpoints.

Snow Course

In the event there is evidence of snow on roads and trails, the permittee would use the same course which was proposed for the 2003 event (See Exhibit B). The wet snow course has been designed to use mainly existing fire roads. The course, accessible from the Rambler's club property, circles Clear Creek canyon. Check points have been located to provide easily access by club members. "C" riders would make one loop of a 30-mile course. "A" and "B" riders would make two and if possible a short special test through the Picacho rocks trail loop located four miles from camp.

Health and Safety

The permittee would furnish BLM with a First Aid and Safety Plan (See Exhibit C). A coordinator would organize and provide qualified personnel who would be equipped with first aid equipment, communications, and transportation to assist accident victims without delay. BLM would serve as a backup in emergency situations.

To prevent potential visitor accidents and ensure the safety of participants, there would be several checkpoints and flagman would be stationed at major road intersections. Sweep riders from the Salinas Ramblers would ride the course to assist disabled or injured participants as appropriate. The Ramblers would provide first aid as well as having first aid personnel at the base camp. All participants would sign an asbestos notification sheet as well as a liability waiver.

The permittee would arrange for one or more participants in the event to wear a BLM supplied air sampler.

Sound Testing

Sound testing would be conducted by the Blue Ribbon Coalition and District 36 AMA representatives under the supervision of the BLM. AMA rules strictly prohibit allowing anyone to ride the event with a non-compliant muffler/spark arrestor. AMA enduro rules also require promoter to conduct a sound test during the event to keep participants from chanking exhaust systems before the start. Sound levels must meet California limits.

Bonding/Fees/Post Use Report

Prior to the event, the permittee would furnish BLM with a Reclamation Bond in the amount of \$500.00. Additionally, the permittee would estimate the number of competitive users and submit a check computing a user fee of \$4.00 per person per day. Also included in this check would be the \$80.00 non-refundable application processing fee. Fifteen days after the completion of activities, the post use report would be submitted with any outstanding user fees. In the event that a refund is due, it would be sent to the permittee within 60 days of BLM receiving the post-use report.

Liability Insurance

The permittee would obtain and submit a property damage, personal injury, and public liability insurance policy sufficient to protect the public and the United States. The policy would name the U.S. Government as co-insured and stipulate that the authorized officer of the Bureau of Land Management would be notified 30 days in advance of the termination or modification of the policy. The permittee would indemnify the United States against any responsibility or liability for damage, injury, or loss to persons and property which may occur during the permitted use period or as a result of such use. The BLM would be protected in the liability insurance coverage provided by the Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club.

14.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE:

The proposed action would not be undertaken as proposed. Existing management and use of the site would continue subject to applicable statutes, regulations, policy and land use plans.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: Proposed Action

The following elements of the human environment, subject to review specified in statute, regulation or executive order, are not located within the project area: Floodplains, Prime or Unique Farm Lands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness.

Air Quality:

Air-borne emissions of asbestos fibers can be a problem in the Clear Creek Management Area. The BLM has an extensive health and safety plan for employee operations in this area, and either utilizes personal protective gear when dusty conditions prevail or avoids the area until measurable precipitation occurs to reduce dust hazards. While the operation standards cannot be enforced for the public, the BLM encourages the public to minimize exposure to dust by publishing air sample readings and fact sheets on asbestos, by providing information on a 24-hour Clear Creek conditions number, and by signing on the ground. Any vehicle use in dusty conditions can increase asbestos inhalation exposure, and for this reason, the BLM conducts pre-event air sampling, stipulating that should conditions be too dry, the event would be rescheduled or canceled.

Cultural Resources and Native American Religious Values:

There are no known paleontological, archeological, or historic resources within the designated routes or vicinity of this proposed activity, with the exception of the following resource: Ca-SBn-62 (ORV-7), a prehistoric archeological site with a bedrock mortar outcrop in a stream bed. Riders and event participants shall stay on the designated course/event route in order to avoid further impacts (or potential impacts) to cultural resources.

Ecologically Critical Area:

The Serpentine Area of Critical Environmental Concern is located within the Clear Creek Management Area, so designated because of natural asbestos and related health concerns, and because of the rare plants and vegetative communities associated with the serpentine soils.

Environmental Justice:

No minority communities or low income communities are located within or adjacent to the proposed project areas. The proposed action would not impact distinct Native American cultural practices or result in disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority communities.

Health & Safety:

The area contains natural asbestos, which is a human carcinogen. Prior to any special use authorizations, the BLM conducts pre-race sampling to determine if asbestos fiber levels are within acceptable limits. A sample

would be taken within 2 weeks of the event date. In the event the sample is above the threshold level, the event would be cancelled.

Invasive, Nonnative Species:

Due to the nutrient deficient nature of serpentine soils, introduction of plants within the serpentine ACEC is difficult. It is unlikely, therefore, that the proposed action would contribute to the introduction of invasive weeds.

Recreation:

The Clear Creek Management Area encompasses roughly 50,000 acres in southern San Benito County. This area receives intensive off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation use, and is also popular with hunters, hikers, and rockhounds. There is a potential that other public users of the CCMA would be locally displaced. Access to camping and staging areas by non-event participants and spectators camp at Oak Flat and in Clear Creek Canyon. Access to some trails could be reduced, but flaggers and signs should help to minimize conflicts between participants and non-participants. Additionally, the event is publicized on the Clear Creek hotline, and on bulletin boards in the area, so other users would be able to learn of the event and plan their trip and visit accordingly.

Soils:

About three-fifths of the Clear Creek Management Area overlies an asbestos-rich body of serpentine. Surrounding this serpentine body are marine sandstones, shales and conglomerate interlayered with basaltic lavas and associated lenses of chert. Soils developing on serpentine tend to be relatively thin and nutrient poor. In some areas, large expanses of these soils are naturally devoid of vegetated, and are known as serpentine barrens. If undisturbed, some barren slopes can become revegetated over long periods of time, while others will not. Barrens develop a gravel lag, which exhibits little gullying. If the lag surface is continually disturbed and broken, soil erosion rates exceed soil formation rates by a large enough amount to result in the complete stripping of the soil profile. In addition, many hundreds of miles of roads were constructed in this area over the past 150 years, to provide access to mining claims, to provide hauling or prospecting access, or to support timber harvest operations. Many of these roads were for temporary use and poorly constructed, and because of the width and number, have been identified as the largest contributor to human-caused erosion in the Clear Creek area.

Surface and Ground Water Quality:

Waterways in the Clear Creek area have elevated concentrations of heavy metals. In some waterways this is a result of natural conditions, and in others this is a result of mining disturbance and ore processing. In 1998 the BLM conducted a water quality study within the Clear Creek Management Area to determine the magnitude of metals being released into streams from abandoned mercury mines. Baseline samples were collected from areas that were considered to reflect natural conditions, and then additional samples were taken at 15 mines, both on-site and downstream.

Tests for a suite of heavy metals were conducted, using standard EPA testing methods. Five mines were closed to vehicle use and more are slated for closure based upon the results of this study, which showed that at certain mines, exhibited metal concentrations exceeded the ingestion and inhalation screening levels. Ph levels appear to be high enough to preclude cumulative increasing concentrations of heavy metals downstream, but reduction of direct delivery of metal-laden sediments from vehicle disturbance is a BLM priority.

Threatened and Endangered Species:

The area is also home to a variety of rare plants and plant habitat. Sensitive plant locations occur proximal to the course, but are either protected by fence or are protected by vegetative or geographic barriers. Several locations were identified for pre-and post event monitoring. These monitoring sites are generally stream crossings, and their condition pre-and post race will help the BLM to address and mitigate for vehicle impacts in these areas.

Wetlands and Riparian Zones:

The proposed action would impact some riparian zones along stream/river courses, including the San Benito River. The reduction of course area paralleling stream courses minimizes the potential negative effects of concentrated motorcycle use in these areas. In contrast, perpendicular course crossings, utilized wherever possible, would result in only small spatial disturbance and minimal increase in sediment delivery. No new stream crossings are proposed.

15.1.2 MITIGATION MEASURES

Health and Safety:

1. All advertisements, flyers, etc. for the event shall be provided to the BLM-Hollister Field Office and include the following language:

WARNING: Soils in the Clear Creek Management Area contain asbestos which has been determined to be hazardous to your health.

2. Where the course intersects county roads or heavy use areas by the public, signs shall be placed to inform the public that a race is occurring at that location. The race date and times will be written clearly on the signs.

Soils:

1. The permittee shall be required to grade or otherwise repair portions of the course which were adversely impacted as a direct consequence of the event such that travel by the general public, or service vehicles associated with maintenance of rights-of-way, is impeded.
2. Corrective and preventative road fixes over the main road network shall be applied where necessary.
3. During wet weather to avoid use on some highly eroding trails, the wet weather/snow course would be ridden.

15.1.3 RESIDUAL IMPACTS

No residual impacts are foreseen.

15.1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: No Action Alternative

Biological Resources including T&E species:

The No Action Alternative would result in no net increase in disturbance to biological resources over that currently occurring as a result of casual use.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources:

There are no foreseen impacts to cultural and/or paleontological resources under this alternative. Moreover, this alternative is preferred due to the

fact that it lessens the possibility of human disturbances to the archeological site noted above.

Invasive Weeds:

There would be no net increase in the introduction of invasive weeds under the No Action alternative.

Recreation:

An annual permitted recreation activity would not occur which is in conformance with the land use plan. In addition, fees which are collected from this event are used for recreation site improvements at the site. This valuable source of funding will provide a direct benefit to the recreation users of Clear Creek to print maps and improve existing camping and staging areas. The loss of the Quicksilver event would result in about \$1,000 in revenues.

15.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

If several event organizers utilized the same route year after year, there could be expected to be some long-term effects on the routes and the adjacent stream courses and related riparian habitat. For example if stream crossings were repeatedly utilized with no hardening structures put into place, consequent sediment delivery in those locations could increase from year to year. Similarly, vegetative diversity and density could be expected to be much different overall than yearly dispersed motorcycle use. Additionally, the BLM is increasingly installing erosion control devices on routes and has a goal to continue to work with event proponents to reduce the number of stream crossings for organized events.

16. NOTIFICATION

Notification of the proposed action and analysis has been prominently posted in the Hollister Field Office area during its undertaking.

17. DOCUMENT REVIEW

Lesly Smith
Environmental Coordinator

02/10/04
Date

Persons/Agencies Consulted:
Hollister Field Office Staff

Preparer(s): Lesly Smith, Outdoor Recreation Planner and Environmental
Coordinator
Robert LaFleur, Clear Creek Manager
Julie Anne Delgado, Botanist
Jason Clark, GIS support

Appeal Rights: Within 30 days of receipt of this decision, you have the right of appeal to the Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 4.400. If an appeal is taken, you must follow the procedures outlined in form 1842-1, Information on Taking Appeals to the Board of Land Appeals. Within 30 days after you appeal, you are required to provide a Statement of Reasons to the Board of Land Appeals listed in Item 3 on the form. In addition, please provide our office with a copy of your Statement of Reasons. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AND ADVISORY:

PROJECT: 2004 Quicksilver Enduro

CONTROL NUMBER: CA-190-EA04-06

Conditions of Approval

1. Issuance of the permit is dependent on the results of pre-race monitoring. The monitoring must show one of the following:
 - a) There has been a significant amount of rain in the Clear Creek area so that the soils are thoroughly wetted.
 - b) Asbestos fiber air monitoring (PCM method) under simulated race conditions is less than 0.1 fiber per cc for an 8-hour time-weighted average and the sample 30-minute short term exposure level calculations are less than 1 fiber per cc. This pre-race testing should be done as close to the scheduled race date as possible, but not more than three weeks. This item requires the participation of two to three members of permittee's club for approximately 3 hours upon the selected test date.
2. A permit will not be issued when soil conditions are too dry or too wet. Prior approval of an alternative date is required. In the event roads and trails have a significant amount of snow, a permit will be issued allowing use on the snow course.
3. Prior to the event, all advertisements, flyers, etc. for the event will include the following language:

WARNING: Soils in the Clear Creek Management Area contain asbestos which has been determined to be hazardous to your health.

One copy of such advertisements/flyers will be provided to the BLM-Hollister Field Office.
4. Where the course intersects county roads or heavy use areas by the public, signs will be placed to inform the public that a race is occurring at that location. The race date and times will be written clearly on the signs.
5. A written notice of the asbestos health hazard will be provided to all event entrants. Each entrant must sign a statement that they have read and understood the asbestos health hazard information. The originals of the signed sheets will be given to the BLM.
6. Vehicle play or washing in the San Benito River or any other streams or creeks is prohibited.

7. Letters to private landowners, whose lands may be affected by the event will be notified by certified mail, return receipt requested. A copy of the letter and the signed receipts will be furnished to the BLM-Hollister Field Office. The letter will instruct landowners to notify the race sponsor and the BLM if they object to the course crossing their private land.
8. The permittee shall designate a field contract representative (FCR) who will be responsible for overseeing compliance with protective conditions and for coordinating compliance with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The FCR must be onsite during all event activities. The FCR shall have the authority to halt all event activities that are in violation of the conditions. The FCR shall have a copy of the decision record and conditions of approval during event related activities. The FCR may be a crew chief or field supervisor, a project manager, or any other employee of the permittee.
9. No camping, staging, riding, parking or other vehicle use is allowed on the island or west bank of the San Benito River, to protect a population of the San Benito evening primrose (*Camissonia benitensis*) which is found there.
10. All vehicles will stay on existing roads and on the predetermined course. Straying from the course will not be allowed. As it pertains to the limited use areas ("B" areas) there will be no passing through openings in the brush or barren areas in deviation from the route, and there will be no shortcutting of corners.

Roads and trails may not be closed or blocked to general public use unless specifically authorized in advance by BLM.

Should motorcycles break down, they will be moved to the side of the road, but not into any vegetation. Should participants stop to rest, they will pull over onto side roads or areas devoid of vegetation. Any entrant who abandons the event en route will exit the course on open routes of travel.

11. All vehicles associated with event (spectator, support and participant) must meet State and Federal registration and equipment requirements. Vehicles must be registered pursuant to CVC 4000 or 38000, or the laws of the state of residence of the owner, with the appropriate vehicle license plate or registration sticker displayed.

D.O.T. approved seat belts must be worn by all front seat occupants of vehicles originally equipped with seatbelts.

All motorcycles and ATV's shall be equipped with a spark arrestor. The muffler/exhaust must comply with EPA excessive noise standards.

The permittee will insure that the participant vehicles are available for pre-event inspection by BLM, State and/or local law enforcement personnel.

12. Course flagging or ribbon may be tied, clipped or stapled to trees or vegetation, as long as staples are not longer than 3/8". Nailing of signs to trees or vegetation is not allowed. A representative sample of course marking will be provided to the BLM prior to the event.
13. The first aid and safety coordinator will be at the event to direct first aid and emergency rescue procedures. If any death or serious injury occurs in connection with this event, including spectators, participants and bystanders, the permittee shall notify BLM and other proper authorities immediately. All reporting forms will be filled out and returned within 72 hours. Minor injuries may be reported with the post use report.
14. The permittee is responsible for public health and safety during all phases of the event. This includes, but is not limited to, spectator control, gas stop fire safety, toilet/sanitary facilities and trash pickup and disposal. No pit racing on BLM lands will be allowed.

Littering on public land is prohibited. All trash must be contained in garbage receptacles or bags.

Trash and food items would be carried out by the participants. The permittee would arrange to have a tail vehicle follow the participants and pick up any garbage that is inadvertently left behind.

15. The sale or dispensing of (e.g. redemption of drink tickets) alcoholic beverages on BLM lands is prohibited. Open alcoholic beverage containers are not allowed on or in vehicles on BLM lands.
16. When the event is over, a joint compliance check of the permit area will be made. The permittee and the Authorized Officer shall hold a joint inspection of the permit area to determine if compliance with the terms and conditions of this permit has been completed. The permittee shall perform within 30 days after the event at their own expense any required modifications or additional reclamation work needed to comply with the terms of this permit as conclusively determined by the Authorized Officer. The permittee will be required to grade or otherwise repair portions of the course and/or checkpoints which were adversely impacted as a direct consequence of the event such that travel by the general public, or service vehicles associated with maintenance of rights-of-way, is impeded.

17. Participants would be advised that many other visitors may be encountered along the course, and that proper riding etiquettes shall be observed at all times.
18. The permittee will comply with all conditions contained in this permit unless otherwise approved in writing by the Authorized Officer. Non-compliance with these conditions by the permittee, or any of his agents may at the option of the Authorized Officer result in the cancellation or suspension of the permit or adverse action against the permittee.
19. The permittee shall comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations issued hereunder, existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated, affecting in any manner construction, operation, maintenance or termination of the permit.
20. The permittee shall confine all activities within the area specifically defined in the permit.
21. All highway **directional signs** for the event will be removed as soon as possible after the event (but not later than **one week**).
22. **Route markings** will be cleaned up within **two weeks** after the event.
23. All related event **trash and litter** will be cleaned up within **24 hours of the event**. The amount of the bond refund will be reduced by \$50.00 for each week the cleanup is delayed.
24. The post use report will be submitted within 15 days after the event.

Advisory

1. Actions other than those explicitly approved by the Bureau of Land Management which result in impacts upon archaeological resources, shall be subject to the judicial proceedings of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. As property of the United States, no person may, without authorization, excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any historic or prehistoric site, artifact, or object of antiquity located on public lands.