U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
PALM SPRINGS-SOUTH COAST FIELD OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
EA Number CA-660-05-71

DATE: July 2005

TITLE/PROJECT TYPE: Burned Area Emergency Stabilization And Rehabilitation Plan: Paradise Fire

BLM OFFICE: Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office
690 W. Garnet Ave., PO Box 581260
North Palm Springs, CA 92258-1260

APPLICANT/PROPONENT: Bureau of Land Management

LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTION: Public lands in the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC and San Gorgonio Wilderness affected by the Paradise Fire in San Bernardino County, California. See attached maps.

LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE and Other Regulatory Compliance:
In accordance with Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5-3, the proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the following approved land use plans: *California Desert Conservation Area Plan* (1980 as amended).

The Wildlife and Vegetation Assessments portion of the Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans (ES and ER Plans) documents the effects of the fires, suppression activities, proposed stabilization and rehabilitation work, and potential post fire flooding and sediment delivery to all Federally-listed threatened and endangered species and their habitat. An Emergency Section 7 Consultation was not initiated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, informal consultation was initiated on July 11 in order to clear areas for ESR, and is incorporated in the ESR Plan and in this EA. BLM would be responsible for initiating additional consultations on any actions not covered by the ESR Plan. BLM would continue to coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service upon implementation of the ESR Plan, such as for any proposed herbicide applications, to ensure continued compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended.

The State Protocol Agreement for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act applies to this undertaking. The thresholds for direct consultation (Protocol at Section VI) the California Office of Historic Preservation

(SHPO) have not been exceeded. Since this undertaking does not exceed the thresholds and has no effect, no consultation with SHPO is required.

This undertaking will be reported to SHPO by the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office as part of the required annual report of activities conducted under the Protocol.

Treatments and emergency stabilization actions are proposed in wilderness. Any subsequent monitoring actions in the San Gorgonio Wilderness are subject to the *Wilderness Act of 1964* and the *California Desert Protection Act of 1994*.

Lands within the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC are also included in the proposed multi-jurisdiction Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The BLM completed a plan amendment for the Coachella Valley in 2002 to manage BLM lands consistent with the proposed MSHCP. The BLM coordinates with city and county governments, the USFWS, and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) to manage these public lands to meet the goals of the MSHCP. This environmental assessment includes proposed mitigation measures to ensure implementation of the Plan is consistent with the proposed MSHCP.

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Paradise fire burned over 2,300 acres of BLM managed public lands between June 22 and 26, 2005. This fire was located in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California. The fire burned portions of the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve ACEC, an important wetland and riparian area, and portions of the Big Morongo Canyon Regional Park. BLM manages the Regional Park under an agreement with the San Bernardino County Division of Regional Parks. The fire affected habitat for numerous species, including T&E species, riparian resources, and popular recreation and interpretive facilities in the Regional Park.

The Paradise Fire began in the community of Morongo Valley at 1:00 PM on June 22. The fire began as a house fire, burning six homes, then turned southeast, jumped Highway 62, and burned onto public lands. Strong winds from the southwest, high temperatures, and an accumulation of fine fuels (invasive grasses) contributed to the rapid spread and intensity of the fire. At about 3:30 PM, the fire entered the Big Morongo Canyon Regional Park. There were no known visitors in the Preserve/Park during the fire. The initial attack on the fire was carried out by the local Morongo Valley Fire Department, San Bernardino County, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). The BLM authorized CDF to use all mechanical means (bulldozers, etc.) within the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve ACEC and San Gorgonio Wilderness to suppress and control the fire. CDF Incident Command Team 2 from Northern California arrived on June 23 to take over command of the fire. At the peak of

the fire, CDF mobilized 69 engines, 37 hand crews, 5 bulldozers, 7 water tenders, and 12 aircraft. Over 900 personnel were involved in the incident.

The BLM Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC) ordered an Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) Team to assess the damage to public lands and to prepare a Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan. An emergency stabilization plan is required to be submitted within 21 days of control of a wildfire, which for the Paradise Fire is July 17, 2005. This environmental assessment analyzes the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the proposed Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans on BLM administered public lands affected by the Paradise Fire in June of 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION and ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

BLM proposes to implement the specifications and management recommendations listed in the Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans (copies attached) prepared by the BLM ESR team for the Paradise Fire in June of 2005.

The ESR Plans and proposed suppression related restoration projects include the following actions on public lands:

1) Monitor and Control Tamarisk and Other Invasive Species

Tamarisk is present in Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, and in order to control it post-fire, existing plants and any newly detected seedlings will be removed. A combination of treatments will be used. Small seedlings will be hand pulled or sprayed with herbicide. Larger, established plants will be controlled using herbicides and if any resprouts occur, these will be subsequently treated with herbicide. Monitoring for the presence of Saharan mustard within the fire perimeter will be conducted in the late winter and early spring. Any Saharan mustard plants found will be removed by hand pulling or hoeing. If it is determined that hand pulling or hoeing is not an efficient control method, herbicide use will be considered in accordance with BLM policy. See Map Attachment 4 for location of potential Tamarisk resprouts.

2) Install Fencing and Barriers to Protect Treatments

Fencing and barriers are needed to limit vehicular and pedestrian access to burned areas during stabilization. Previous fencing and barriers were damaged during the fire, which would allow increased access into areas of the Preserve. Dozer lines created during suppression actions now provide

access into the ACEC that did not previously exist. Foot travel within the burned area is hazardous and both foot and motorized travel may increase the spread of invasive plants in areas recovering from the fire. Approximately three miles total of fencing would be installed at locations where dozer lines have created new routes and OHV trespass has been observed, and where access points lead into sensitive burned areas. See Map Attachment 5 for locations.

3) Replace Bridges

Foot bridges on the Mesquite Trail in the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve are needed to enable foot travel across portions of Big Morongo Creek and provide access to Big Morongo Canyon. This access is needed for monitoring and control of post-fire invasive species and for patrols of the Preserve during the emergency closure. There would be no safe access to Big Morongo Canyon without replacement of the bridges. Bridges would be rebuilt to previous specifications. Materials would be pressure treated wood and galvanized metal hardware. Construction and installation would be by contract. See Map Attachment 3 for locations.

4) Replace Boardwalks

Over 900 feet of existing boardwalks were destroyed in the Paradise Fire. Burned portions of the Marsh Trail (300'), Mesquite Trail (490'), Barn Trail (24'), and Yucca Ridge Trail (116') would be rebuilt on existing trail alignment, and to existing specifications. See Map Attachment 3 for locations and alignment.

4) Remove Hazard Trees

Numerous trees burned during the fire have fallen, or are in danger of falling, over trails or other areas used to access stabilization project sites creating unsafe conditions for visitors and staff. Up to 20 trees would be felled and/or removed. Work would be accomplished by local BLM fire crew(s). Trees have been identified on segments of the Barn Trail, Mesquite Trail, and Canyon Trail. See Map Attachment 3 for locations.

5) Rehabilitate Bulldozer Lines

Bulldozer lines bladed during suppression activities will be rehabilitated. Rehabilitation would include smoothing or pulling down berms, creating water bars where needed, and re-establishing vegetation by using techniques of "pit and mulch". Rehabilitation techniques and impacts in the general area of Lanning Lane were analyzed in EA CA-660-05-45, *Lanning Lane OHV Restoration*. See also Map Attachment 1.

Implementation of actions involving application of herbicides requires separate environmental analysis and NEPA documentation, per BLM policy. Removal of Tamarisk and application of herbicides in Big Morongo Canyon is covered under EA CA-660-94-53.

No Action Alternative

BLM has the option to refuse funding and not implement the proposed Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan. There would be no additional repair to BLM lands beyond the minimum provided by CDF in accordance with their Interagency Agreement with the BLM. Control and monitoring of invasive/non-native plants in burned areas would not occur. Vegetation would be allowed to regenerate through natural processes only. No additional monitoring of T&E species would occur. Repair of trails, boardwalks, fences, gates, and signing would be deferred until additional funding through MLR is authorized. Repair and rehabilitation of dozer lines created during suppression actions and repair of previously completed OHV restoration projects would not occur.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The BLM PSSC Field Office administers over one million acres of public lands in the California Desert Conservation Area, including approximately 30,000 acres within the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC, and 38,000 acres in the San Gorgonio Wilderness. BLM manages the Big Morongo Canyon Regional Park under an agreement with the San Bernardino County Division of Regional Parks. A more complete description of the affected environment is provided in the Resource Assessment sections of the attached ES and ER Plans. A summary description of the affected BLM lands is provided below.

The fire burned 3,080 total acres, including 2,322 acres of public lands managed by BLM, and approximately 40 acres of the County Regional Park. There were no injuries. Losses in the Regional Park include the Covington Barn, 300 feet of the “new” composite boardwalk, approximately 658 feet of wood boardwalk, three foot bridges, five benches, and 17 signs.

Cultural Resources Supplemental Narrative

The Paradise Fire occurred in a locality in which prehistoric use was known to have occurred. Euroamerican use from early in the historical period is documented.

At Contact, the area was seasonally occupied by Serrano bands, later named the “Morongo Band of Mission Indians”. There are two substantial village sites in the vicinity of the fire. Both sites have evidence of occupation during the Late

Period, and glass trade beads were found at the village site at the head of Little Morongo Canyon.

In 1862 smallpox destroyed more than half the Indian population of Morongo Valley. Survivors were moved to a reservation near Banning, and Big Morongo Canyon became a working ranch, passing from one rancher to another until 1968. Evidence dating from its ranching past is present in the vicinity of the Nature Preserve. This evidence included a barn which was destroyed by the Paradise Fire and which is now marked by a concrete foundation.

The areas of disturbance from fire suppression, including mechanically- and hand-constructed fire lines, were surveyed for cultural resources. None were found. The ground surface at damaged sections of boardwalk was also surveyed and no potentially significant cultural resources were found.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Critical Elements

The following table summarizes potential impacts to various elements of the human environment, including the "critical elements" listed in the BLM Manual H-1790-1, Appendix 5 as amended. Elements for which there are no impacts will not be discussed further in this document.

Environmental Element	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
Air Quality	No impacts	No impacts
ACEC's	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect
Cultural Resources	No impacts	No impacts
Native American Concerns	No impacts	No impacts
Farmlands	No impacts	No impacts
Flood Plains	No impacts	No impacts
Minerals	No impacts	No impacts
T&E Animal Species	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect
T&E Plant Species	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect
Invasive, Non-native Species	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect
Wastes (hazardous/solid)	No impacts	No impacts
Water Quality (surface and ground)	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect

Wild and Scenic Rivers	No impacts	No impacts
Wilderness	Beneficial impacts	May adversely affect
Environmental Justice	No impacts	No impacts
Visual Resource Mgmt.	No impacts	No impacts
Energy Policy	No impacts	No impacts

B. Discussion of Impacts

1. **Proposed Action:**

Monitoring and Control of Invasive Species

ACEC: The Big Morongo Canyon ACEC was established to protect native vegetation and other resources, including wetlands and riparian resources which are unique in the Mojave Desert. Control of invasive species would have a beneficial effect on the resources the ACEC was intended to protect.

Cultural/Native American Concerns: Hand pulling of small seedlings and treatment of invasive species with herbicides will result in little or no surface disturbance and these actions do not have the potential to adversely affect historic properties. If it becomes necessary to hoe extensive areas of mustard, cultural resources inventory may be necessary. Effects to historic properties identified as a result of such inventory will be avoided or mitigated as appropriate and in consultation with the SHPO and Native American Tribes.

T&E Species:

Desert Tortoise **(***Gopherus agassizii***):** Under the action alternative, approximately 6.06 acres of Desert tortoise habitat proper would be allowed to regenerate through natural means, while keeping off highway vehicles (OHV) away from fire lines, and reducing overall disturbance to this species. Invasive species would be controlled, allowing improvement of tortoise habitat well above current existing conditions.

Triple Ribbed Milkvetch **(***Astragalus tricarinatus* **):** Under the action alternative, approximately 2.0 acres of triple ribbed milkvetch habitat would be allowed to regenerate through natural means, while keeping off highway vehicles away from fire lines, and reducing overall disturbance to this species. Generally, habitat is expected to improve with the removal of invasive species, allowing more resources for this species.

Invasive Species: This alternative would control invasive species throughout the project area, increasing natural re-vegetation and promoting habitat for federally listed and sensitive species.

Water Quality: Water quality is expected to improve, and increase in quantity with the removal of tamarisk.

Wetlands/Riparian: No fire suppression actions occurred within riparian zones for the paradise fire, and riparian zones are expected to recover with invasive species removal within the riparian zone.

Fencing and Barriers

ACEC: Controlling OHV use in the burned areas and in treatment locations would benefit the resources the ACEC is intended to protect. Fencing is needed to protect visitors from hazardous areas and to protect treatments.

Cultural/Native American Concerns: Fence and barrier locations will be inventoried for cultural resources prior to construction. The proposed fences will occur primarily on slopes above the valley floor. These areas have a minimal potential to contain significant cultural resources. During 2005 cultural inventories were conducted in the Lanning Lane area, slightly south of the proposed fence project area. In addition, portions of the proposed fence are adjacent to stretches of fire line that were constructed for the Paradise fire. These fire lines have been inventoried for cultural resources.

No historic properties were identified as a result of these inventories and this supports the conclusion that the area has a low potential for significant resources. Effects to historic properties identified as a result of such inventory will be avoided or mitigated as appropriate and in consultation with the SHPO and Native American Tribes.

T&E Species:

Desert Tortoise **(***Gopherus agassizii* **):** Fencing/barriers will likely benefit desert tortoise by restricting the movement of off highway vehicle activities. Fencing is not expected to have any detrimental effect on desert tortoise.

Invasive Species: Invasive species are expected to be reduced, and or, controlled because off highway vehicles could act as a vector in the transport of non-native seeds.

Water Quality: Water quality is expected to increase because of reduced erosion within the treatment area.

Repair of Boardwalks and Bridges

ACEC: The Big Morongo Canyon ACEC is a very popular visitor destination for bird watching, nature study, outdoor education, and hiking. The boardwalks provide the only access to the marsh, wetlands, and Big Morongo Canyon. Replacing the boardwalks would benefit public use and enjoyment of the resources the ACEC is intended to protect.

T&E Species:

Least Bell's Vireo **(***Vireo bellii pusillus***):** Least bell's vireo could be affected by rebuilding activities if conducted during breeding season. Rebuilding should take place before January 30, or after July 15, in order to reduce disturbance to least bell's vireo's.

Desert Tortoise **(***Gopherus agassizii* **):** No effect to desert tortoise is expected as this action would take place outside of general tortoise habitat.

Invasive Species: The repair of boardwalks is critical to the reduction of seed dispersal with regard to invasive species. Limiting pedestrian access to boardwalk areas will trap seeds in a predictable pattern, allowing control measures to be concentrated and thus more effective

Water Quality: Water quality is expected to improve through the reduction of erosion that would occur with bare dirt hiking trails.

Wetlands/Riparian: Wetland/Riparian area quality is expected to improve through the use on boardwalks, which will reduce erosion and concentrate invasive species to treatable areas.

Remove Hazard Trees

ACEC: Removing hazard trees would reduce risk to visitors and would benefit public use and enjoyment of the resources the ACEC is intended to protect.

T&E Species:

Least Bell's Vireo **(***Vireo bellii pusillus***):** Least bell's vireo could be affected by tree removal activities if conducted during breeding season. Removal of trees should take place before January 30, or after July 15, in order to reduce disturbance to least bell's vireos.

Desert Tortoise **(***Gopherus agassizii* **):** No effect to desert tortoise is expected as this action would take place outside of general tortoise habitat.

Invasive Species: Removing hazard trees is essential to provide safe access to treatment areas and for monitoring. Removal would have no direct impact on treatments or on invasive species.

Repair of Suppression Dozer Lines

ACEC: Repair of the dozer lines would help rehabilitate native vegetation and improve the conditions of the resources the ACEC is intended to protect.

Cultural Resources: The areas of disturbance from fire suppression, including mechanically- and hand-constructed fire lines, were surveyed for cultural resources. None were found. Stabilization and rehabilitation of constructed control lines will have no effect on cultural resources.

T&E Species:

Desert Tortoise **(***Gopherus agassizii***):** Under the action alternative, approximately 6.06 acres of Desert tortoise habitat proper would be allowed to regenerate through natural means, while keeping off highway vehicles (OHV) away from fire lines, and reducing overall disturbance to this species. Vertical mulching, vegetation deposition, and re-contouring of natural slopes would occur, allowing more natural flooding regimes. Invasive species would be controlled, allowing improvement of tortoise habitat well above current existing conditions. Natural vegetation would be used as mulch in order to trap sediment and promote natural re-vegetation.

Triple Ribbed Milkvetch **(***Astragalus tricarinatus* **):** Under the action alternative, approximately 2.0 acres of triple ribbed milkvetch habitat would be allowed to regenerate through natural means, while keeping off highway vehicles away from fire lines, and reducing overall disturbance to this species. Vertical mulching, vegetation deposition, and re-contouring of natural slopes would occur, allowing more natural flooding regimes. Generally, habitat is expected to improve with the removal of invasive species, allowing more resources for this species.

Water Quality/Wetlands: Repair of dozer lines would reduce effects of erosion and possible sedimentation into Big Morongo Creek. Conditions of water quality and wetlands would improve.

Wilderness: Construction of dozer lines is a non-conforming use in wilderness. Although authorized under emergencies for protection of resources and public safety, restoration should occur after suppression activities are completed. Rehabilitation of dozer lines in Wilderness would help improve resources degraded during suppression and eliminate possible access routes for motorized vehicles into wilderness.

Visual Resources: Restoration of dozer lines would help reduce visual impacts to the area created by hillside scarring and elimination of soil and vegetation.

2. **No Action Alternative:**

Monitoring and Control of Invasive Species

ACEC: Spread or regeneration of invasive species would have a detrimental impact to the native vegetation and other resources the ACEC is intended to protect.

T&E Species:

Triple Ribbed Milk-Vetch **(***Astragalus tricarinatus* **):** Under the no action alternative, approximately 2.0 acres dozer and hand lines would not be restored. Erosion would be allowed to persist in milkvetch habitat, and no barriers to illegal Off Highway Vehicle travel would most likely exist in these areas. Natural vegetation would not likely move into the disturbed areas as quickly, allowing non-native grasses and shrubs to dominate the local areas, while allowing tortoise habitat to be further degraded.

Invasive Species: Invasive plants will likely out-compete native plants, degrading habitat further, and exacerbating the detrimental effects of the paradise fire.

Water Quality: Water quality will likely be affected in a negative way. Tamarisk monoculture, and Saharan mustard proliferation in upland areas would be extremely likely.

Wetlands/Riparian: Wetland/Riparian would likely suffer the most damage in the absence of invasive species control. Tamarisk would likely overtake a large portion of the burned area riparian zone, resulting in poor wildlife habitat quality, and further threats to federally listed species.

Protective Fencing/Barriers

ACEC: Uncontrolled OHV use could lead to impacts to treatments designed to restore resources the ACEC is intended to protect.

T&E Species: Under the no action alternative, fencing and barriers would not be installed. Uncontrolled OHV use could lead to erosion persisting in milkvetch habitat. Natural vegetation would not likely move into the disturbed areas as quickly, allowing non-native grasses and shrubs to dominate the local areas, while allowing tortoise habitat to be further degraded.

Invasive Species: Uncontrolled OHV use could lead to erosion and additional soil disturbance. Natural vegetation would not likely move into the disturbed areas as quickly, allowing non-native grasses and shrubs to dominate the local areas.

Water Quality: Uncontrolled OHV use could lead to erosion and additional soil disturbance, leading to additional sedimentation into Big Morongo Creek.

Wetlands/Riparian: Uncontrolled OHV use could lead to impacts to wetlands and riparian areas because of access to the marsh and Big Morongo Canyon through areas with previously dense vegetation or pre-fire fencing/barriers.

Repair of Boardwalks and Bridges

ACEC: The no action alternative would result in no access to major portions of the ACEC, including the marsh and Big Morongo Canyon. Lack of access would limit effective treatments designed to enhance and restore resources damaged in the fire.

T&E Species: Lack of access would limit effective treatments designed to enhance and restore resources damaged in the fire.

Invasive Species: Lack of access would limit effective treatments designed to enhance and restore resources damaged in the fire. With no boardwalks, there is an increased chance of invasive seeds being introduced from walking through marsh areas.

Water Quality: Not replacing the boardwalks could impact water quality from walking through marsh and riparian areas.

Wetlands/Riparian: Not replacing the boardwalks could impact resources from walking through marsh and riparian areas.

C. Mitigation Measures

Desert Tortoise: Utilize standard operating procedures for construction activities in tortoise habitat. See attached Desert Tortoise Stipulations.

Least Bell's Vireo: Refrain from construction activities during least bell's vireo breeding season, approximately March 1st through July 15th, When working in least bell's vireo habitat *Big Morongo Canyon.

Nelson's Bighorn Sheep: If fences are to be placed in Bighorn Sheep habitat, a smooth strand on the lowest wire should be used because sheep generally crawl under fences. According to Helvie, 1971, fences

have been detrimental to bighorn sheep, and should limited to the bare number of linear miles possible. The following guidelines should be used when designing the fence.

- Posts or stays should be placed not further than ten feet apart.
- Wires should be spaced 20, 35, and 39 inches above the ground (if a fourth wire is needed, it should be spaced 43 inches above the ground).
- The bottom wire should be smooth (not barbed).
- Under no circumstances should the space between the lower 2 wires be less than 15 inches.
- Under no circumstances should the top 2 wires be no more than four inches apart.

Invasive Species: Contractors and BLM staff need to be diligent in cleaning vehicles and tools in order to ensure no invasive species seeds are transferred to any site during construction activities.

Cultural Resources: If previously unidentified cultural resources are encountered during project activities, all work will cease in the immediate area and the PSSC Cultural Resources Specialist will be notified.

D. Residual Impacts

1. **Proposed Action**

There would be no residual impacts from implementing the proposed actions.

2. **No Action Alternative**

Residual impacts from the No Action Alternative would include impacts to watersheds, increased safety hazards to visitors and authorized users from loss of bridges and boardwalks, spread of invasive non-native plants, and impairment of recovery efforts for T&E species.

E. Cumulative Impacts

1. **Proposed Action**

The long-term cumulative impacts from the Proposed Action would be beneficial to all resources on public lands. Recovery of T&E species, riparian vegetation communities, wilderness resources, visual resources, and watersheds would be enhanced. Long term opportunities for hiking, nature study, photography, and other low impact recreation uses would be improved from recovery and stabilization efforts. Fences, when used to protect treatments, or control access,

should be removed when treatments are successful, and when public recognition of sensitive areas is understood.

2. **No Action Alternative**

The long term cumulative impacts from the No Action Alternative include continued risk of erosion, impacts to watersheds, spread of invasive non-native plants, and impairment of recovery efforts for T&E species.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Pete Sorensen, USFWS/Carlsbad ESO.
BLM Burned Area Emergency Response Team, Palm Springs, CA, July 2005.
Jim DeForge, Bighorn Institute, Palm Springs CA.
Helvie, Jack, B. 1971. Bighorns and fences. Desert Bighorn Council, Transactions.

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REVIEWED BY: _____ _____
Environmental Coordinator Date

Attachments:

Resource Assessments and Maps
Desert Tortoise Stipulations

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office

DECISION RECORD

CA660-05-71

Name of Project: Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans for the Paradise Fire

Decision: It is my decision is approve the proposed Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans prepared for BLM-administered public lands affected by the Paradise Fire in June of 2005. Compliance with the mitigation measures identified in the environmental assessment prepared by BLM (EA CA-660-05-71) is hereby required and incorporated into this decision record as stipulations.

Rationale: The ESR Plans would help to immediately protect resources and public safety in those areas affected by the Paradise Fire in the Big Morongo Canyon ACEC. Planned actions will stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources and minimize threats to life and property resulting from the effects of these fires. Immediate action is needed to minimize adverse affects during the summer months when monsoon rains are likely in desert areas of Southern California. The ESR Plan is in conformance with the following applicable lands use plans for BLM-administered lands: *California Desert Conservation Area Plan* (1980 as amended).

Finding of No Significant Impact: Environmental impacts associated with the proposed action have been assessed in environmental assessment CA-660-05-71. Based on the analysis provided in the attached EA, I conclude the approved action is not a major federal action and will result in no significant impacts to the environment under the criteria in Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.18 and 1508.27. Preparation of an environmental impact statement to further analyze possible impacts is not required pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Approved by: _____

Field Manager Date 7/15/05
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
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