

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Environmental Assessment # DOI-BLM-CA-D070-2014-0074

Environmental Assessment

Hot Spring Day Use Area Vault Toilet Replacement

Imperial County, California

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
El Centro Field Office
1661 South 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243

July 2014



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Chapter 1 Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages public lands for the benefit of all. In the El Centro Field Office Resource Area, public visitation and recreational use occurs often in the wintertime. To meet the long term camping needs of winter visitors while protecting the desert environment, the BLM has established Long Term Visitor Areas (LTVA) to concentrate long term camping and therefore lessen resource impacts. One of El Centro's three LTVAs is the Hot Spring LTVA, located 5 miles southwest of Holtville on Old Highway 80. This popular site consists of a camping area adjacent to an active hot spring located in the day use area.

The current restroom facilities at the day use area are in disrepair. New facilities would provide a cleaner and more sanitary restroom for the visitors of the area. The facilities are currently not readily accessible to visitor with disabilities. New facilities would be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) which requires all newly installed facilities to be reasonably accessible to those individuals that are differentially able.

Replacement of the toilets in the Hot Spring day use area with ADA/ABA approved toilets and access would take place in the following location:

SBBM

T.16S. R.16E.

NW¹/₄ NE¹/₄ section 13

Purpose and Need

The BLM is responding to the need for new facilities to be built to provide safe and sanitary rest areas for the visiting public and in order to be in compliance with state and federal laws.

Conformance

This proposed action is subject to the following land use plans and other reference documents:

Long Term Visitor Area Management Plan
LTVA Task Force Report
California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as amended
CA-067-EA-83-30 Establishing 3 LTVAs

Date Approved: August 1984
Date Approved: November 1993
Date Approved: January 1980
Date Approved: September 1983

Chapter 2 Proposed Action and Alternatives

No Action

Currently, the toilets at the Hot Springs day use area are degrading and not in compliance with ADA and ABA. Under the no action alternative, no new ADA/ABA compliant toilets would be installed and this would result in non-compliance with federal regulations and unsafe conditions for the visiting public.

Proposed Action

The existing vault toilets (2) at the Hot Spring day use area would be removed and replaced with a new double vault CXT toilet and access to this toilet would be constructed to bring it into compliance and meet ADA/ABA standards.

As part of the construction process, the existing vault toilets will be pumped for removal and rinsed three times; all effluent and rinsate will be removed from federal lands for disposal in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations by a licensed contractor. A vacuum truck certified for the removal and transportation of human waste will be utilized to complete this phase of the contract.

The entire buildings will be demolished including above and below ground structures, the remaining hole from the vault demolition will be backfilled utilizing certified fill material, material compacted in six inch lifts compacted to 95+%. All demolition debris will be disposed of offsite at a site licensed to receive building debris. Equipment utilized in the demolition process will be limited to a track hoe/backhoe, water truck, demolition dump trucks and essential support vehicles. Demolition will be by contract at a minimum of 48 hours prior the arrival of the new CXT.

The area of disturbance would be limited to only what is needed to remove and preplace the vault toilets and will also be limited to the area that is already disturbed by pedestrian and motorized vehicle traffic to the greatest extent possible. Installation of the new CXT vault toilet will utilize a backhoe, water truck, dump truck, essential support vehicles and an overhead crane. ADA/ABA parking and accessibility parking pad will be constructed utilizing a small dozer, skid steer tractor, water truck, essential support vehicles, and one concrete truck all using existing routes/roads and parking area. The post and cable will also be re-aligned in an attempt to mediate a power pole traffic hazard at the entrance to the parking area. The post and cable will be moved in such a way as to direct traffic away from the power pole that is located directly in the current traffic path entering the parking area. The site will be properly contoured to achieve natural terrain features and encourage natural re-vegetation upon completion of this project.

Additional Design Features for Resource Protection:

- All necessary air quality permits and plans will be obtained prior to project mobilization. Fugitive dust will be controlled with appropriate control measures.
- A biological monitor will be on site during construction activities.
- To prevent the introduction/dissemination of invasive plant species into/out of the project area all vehicles and equipment will be cleaned and inspected prior to entering or leaving the project area.

Chapter 3 Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

Resources

Recreation and wildlife are the two resources that may be affected by the proposed action. Both are discussed further in this chapter. The following resources were considered, but found to not be relevant to this action because they were not found in the area or will not be affected: soils, watershed, air quality, ACEC, cultural resources, prime or unique farmland, floodplains, threatened and endangered vegetation, water quality, waste or hazardous materials, wetland and riparian zones, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness, visual resources, and environmental justice.

Recreation

Affected Environment

The Hot Springs day use area and LTVA are active recreational areas during the winter months. The LTVA is closed to long term camping during the summer season when the proposed action is scheduled to occur. There is low visitation to the day use area in August and September. Recreational activities will be disrupted slightly during the demolition and installation of the new double vault toilet and ADA/ABA parking pad but the disruption is projected to be minimal and of a short duration over a two week period.

Environmental Effects of the No Action Alternative

The old existing toilets would continue to degrade and be out of compliance for ADA/ABA. This will lead to a decrease in visitor satisfaction and non-compliance with existing federal law.

Environmental Effects of the Proposed Action

This project will enhance the recreation potential for to site by correcting a potential threat to human health and by increasing visitor access. The proposed action will have a beneficial effect on recreation.

Wildlife

Affected Environment

There is the potential for one BLM sensitive species to occur in the project area, Flat-tailed horned lizard (FTHL). The project is outside the East Mesa (FTHL) Management Area.

Environmental Effects of the No Action Alternative

Construction would not occur and there would be no impact to the FTHL.

Environmental Effects of the Proposed Action

The degree to which the action may adversely affect FTHL or its habitat is nominal. A biological monitor would be present as needed during construction.

Cumulative Impacts

Impacts to FTHL from the project would not be detectable at a population level.

Chapter 4 List of Preparers/Reviewers

Bureau of Land Management El Centro Field Office:

Nicollee Gaddis, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Andrew Trouette, Botanist

Christine McCollum, Archaeologist

Dallas Meeks, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Carrie Simmons, Resources Branch Supervisor

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Finding of No Significant Impact

Hot Spring Day Use Area Vault Toilet Replacement

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July 2014



Proposed Action Title/Type: Hot Spring Day Use Area Vault Toilet Replacement

Location of Proposed Action: Hot Spring Day Use Area, East Imperial County, CA

SBBM

T.16S. R.16E.

NW¼ NE¼ section 13

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages public lands for the benefit of all. In the El Centro Field Office Resource Area, public visitation and recreational use occurs often in the wintertime. To meet the long term camping needs of winter visitors while protecting the desert environment, the BLM has established Long Term Visitor Areas (LTVA) to concentrate long term camping and therefore lessen resource impacts. One of El Centro's three LTVAs is the Hot Spring LTVA, located 5 miles southwest of Holtville on Old Highway 80. This popular site consists of a camping area adjacent to an active hot spring located in the day use area.

The current restroom facilities at the day use area are in disrepair. New facilities would provide a cleaner and more sanitary restroom for the visitors of the area. The facilities are currently not readily accessible to visitor with disabilities. New facilities would be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) which requires all newly installed facilities to be reasonably accessible to those individuals that are differentially able.

CONSISTENCY WITH LAND USE PLANS, LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

This selected alternative is subject to the following land use plans and other reference documents:

Long Term Visitor Area Management Plan
LTVA Task Force Report
California Desert Conservation Area Plan, as amended
CA-067-EA-83-30 Establishing 3 LTVAs

Date Approved: August 1984
Date Approved: November 1993
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SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

The existing vault toilets (2) at the Hot Spring day use area would be removed and replaced with a new double vault CXT toilet and access to this toilet would be constructed to bring it into compliance and meet the ADA and ABA standards.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The El Centro Field Office interdisciplinary review and analysis determined that the proposed action would not trigger significant impacts on the environment based on criteria established by regulations, policy and analysis.

Based on the findings discussed herein, I conclude that the proposed action is not a major Federal action and will result in no significant impacts to the environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in applicable land use plans. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) to further analyze possible impacts is not required pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

This determination is based on the rationale that the significance criteria, as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1508.27) have not been met. “Significantly” as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity.

In making this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the following criteria have been considered, in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 C.F.R. 1508.27.

Context: This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short and long term effects are relevant.

Environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and alternatives have been assessed by an interdisciplinary team and described in DOI-BLM-CA-D070-2014-0074. The context of the Environmental Assessment (EA) analysis was determined to be at a local and regional scale in Imperial County, California. The effects of the action are not applicable on a national scale since no nationally significant values were involved.

Intensity: This refers to the severity of impact. The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1) Impacts can be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects.

Beneficial Effects: The selected action would upgrade the existing recreational facilities to meet requirements for potable water and human waste and bring the toilets into compliance with ADA and ABA. This action would create safer conditions for the visiting public.

Adverse Effects: No adverse effects will occur due to this action.

2) The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

The selected alternative will improve public health and safety by providing an upgraded water system that meets the requirements for potable water and human waste. The ADA/ABA accessible facilities will provide easier access for all visitors.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The selected action will not affect unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The selected action will not cause any degree of negative effects on the quality of the human environment which are likely to be highly controversial.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

Possible effects on the human environment are null, therefore are not highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The action may not establish any degree of precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.

The action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts including connected actions regardless of land ownership.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The action will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat is nominal. Impacts to the Flat tail horned lizard from the project would not be detectable at a population level.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

This action does not threaten a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

Reviewed by: _____
Nicollee Gaddis, Planning & Environmental Coordinator Date

Approved by: _____
Thomas F. Zale, Field Manager Date
El Centro Field Office



Google earth





Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



Hot Springs LTVA Work Area



Legend
Work_Area

Date: 7/29/2014