

Appendix C

Amargosa River Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Sign and Interpretive Strategy

This interpretive strategy guides the use of signs and interpretive tools to accomplish Amargosa River ACEC management goals and objectives. This strategy is limited in scope to site and message content because the primary methods for delivery are signs and personal messages. Additional, comprehensive regional interpretive strategies, as identified in other plans such as the Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT) General Management Plan, will likely involve additional messages and delivery methods such as visitor's centers, interpretive trails, etc. The opportunity may exist to include additional interpretive themes related to other Amargosa River resources in any future OSNHT interpretive strategies. Future interpretive strategies would be included in the environmental analysis of future management documents and would be subject to full public scoping at that time.

Sign Strategy

Existing identification signs for the Amargosa Canyon and Grimshaw Lake Natural Areas will be replaced with new Amargosa River ACEC signs. Existing mounting post will be re-used. New direction signs would guide travelers to the ACEC from Baker, Death Valley Junction, Shoshone, and Nevada State Highway 160. New site direction and identification signs would be installed for each trailhead, wayside exhibit, and overlook. A byline on the site identification signs would identify the name of the location. International recreation symbols would identify available types of activity. Direction signs would go on the adjoining paved road and direct traffic to the site while identification signs would be located along site entry roads and where visitors park their vehicles.

The OSNHT would be identified through the ACEC using symbols adopted in the OSNHT Comprehensive Management Plan. The Grimshaw Lake and Amargosa Canyon Watchable Wildlife Sites would continue using the same names. Regulatory signs would be installed where needed within the ACEC and on a case-by-case basis as determined by site-specific needs, use trends, and monitoring data. A *pack it in – pack it out* sign strategy would be used throughout the ACEC to encourage visitors to take their trash home with them. Wilderness and travel (route) management signs would conform to agency and California Desert District signing practices. This consists of posting relevant message decals on color-coded fiberglass markers. Only open routes of travel will be signed.

Open Routes and trails may be marked with unique identifiers. This would include the existing white rocks that mark the Mesa Trail and rock cairns marking the Sperry Wash Route, the Badland Trail, and the Willow Creek Loop Trail. Trail art would be incorporated, where appropriate, in related site specific plans for trails, kiosks, trailheads and overlooks. Destination and mileage signs would be located at key points along trails and at trail junctions. This includes

trailheads, junctions, and key geographical positions. Kiosks, wayside exhibits, interpretive sign panels, signs, mounting posts, and hardware will be maintained on an as needed basis.

Interpretation Strategy

This interpretive strategy covers the lower Amargosa River valley, from the Upper ACEC Unit near the Nevada border, to the south end of the ACEC. This greater planning boundary was adopted for the presentation of a consistent public message. Concern about the ecological health of the watershed, with special emphasis on riparian zones, was a primary factor driving the NEMO 2002 amendments to the CDCA Plan. Therefore, this strategy addresses interpretation on a landscape scale. There are several other special management areas to the south of the Amargosa River ACEC and they have their own management plans addressing additional sign and interpretive needs. These include Sperry Wash Route, Dumont Dunes Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Area, and Salt Creek ACEC. Death Valley National Park, located just west of the Amargosa River ACEC addresses management and interpretation in its April 2002 General Management Plan (GMP) and accompanying EIS.

The ACEC plan includes two alternatives for interpretation. These are: the proposed action (alternative one) which is the implementation of this strategy and the no action alternative (alternative three) where implementation of existing plans will continue. Alternative two, the low intensity management alternative, is the same as the no action alternative.

In the proposed action, interpretation would occur at the sites on Map C-1 showing kiosk, trailheads, and overlooks. These sites were selected with two criteria: First, kiosks were located along primary routes visitors use to access the ACEC. At these locations, priority is given to a consistent message regarding sensitive ACEC resources. Second, sites were selected where there is good access to interesting or unique recreational opportunities. At these sites, the priority is to interpret the unique features of each location. Table C-1 identifies and prioritizes interpretive themes by site.

A consistent message about the ACEC resource values will be delivered using a multi-media approach. The proposed action accomplishes this through the development of kiosks on major roads leading into the ACEC. Each kiosk would have similar information about sensitive ACEC resources, and the appropriate human behavior necessary to avoid negative impacts. Concurrently, the same message would be delivered on a Barstow Field Office web page for the ACEC. Additional web pages will be prepared for the OSNHT and watchable wildlife sites. New content will be added about the area's cultural and historic points of interest to the existing Barstow Field Office cultural resources web page. The message content from these sources will be condensed into a site-specific brochure.

Additional interpretive material will be developed on a site-specific basis to explain unique resource values in the ACEC. This includes, but is not limited to, the 1903 Building along Willow Creek and the Borehole Hot Spring north of Tecopa. Interpretive signs would be installed along three trails. Along the Amargosa River Trail, signs will cover a range of cultural and natural resource topics while signs along Grimshaw Lake Watchable Wildlife Trail will

focus on endangered species and wetland habitat. Additionally, signs along the Tecopa Hill Trail will focus on history and hot springs. Signs would be small and site specific. Preferred mounting will consist of a single steel post.

Table C-1: Amargosa River ACEC Interpretive Themes for Trailheads, Wayside Exhibits, and Overlooks

	<i>First Level Interpretive Themes</i>	<i>Second Level Interpretive Themes</i>	<i>Third Level Interpretive Themes</i>
<i>Basic Visitor Info Common to all Wayside Exhibits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site identification sign • Desert travel warnings and tips • Area map panel • Roads/type of condition/use • ACEC/wilderness boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor services/amenities • Sites to see and things to do • WSR, OSNHT, T&T • Trailheads, exhibits, overlooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive topics • ACEC purpose & need • Amargosa riparian area/sensitive resources • Area rules and regulations/dos and don'ts • Wilderness dos and don'ts
<i>1 Tecopa Trailhead</i>	Amargosa River ACEC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background • Amargosa River pupfish and dace 	OSNHT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National significance and history • Initial 1829 Armijo canyon route • Fremont/Carson 1844 trip • Nearby trail sites • 1848 Mormon trip/Mormon Road 	Amargosa Wild and Scenic River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National system • Unique/rare desert river and ecology • Known river flow regime/history • Purpose and meaning of designation
<i>2 China Ranch Trailhead</i>	Large area map panel, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, places, sites to see • Local services • Wilderness boundaries/corridors • OSNHT • Amargosa Wild and Scenic River • T&T, twenty mule team route 	Amargosa River ACEC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background • Desert spring ecology 	Prehistoric Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Americans and their lifestyle • Four previous civilizations • Native food sources and resources
<i>3 Cowboy Canyon Trailhead</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small area map panel • Overview of main canyon • Overview of ACEC, purpose and need 	Travel Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose for restrictions • Access opportunities and regulations • Route signing strategy 	None

<p>4 <i>Grimshaw Watchable Wildlife Trailhead</i></p>	<p>Amargosa River ACEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background • Amargosa vole and habitat • Marsh habitats and associated birds 	<p>History of Mr. Grimshaw/Tecopa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early business owner • Namesake lake • History of Tecopa 	<p>Trailside Interpretive Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T&E species and their habitats
<p>5 <i>Tecopa Hills Trailhead</i></p>	<p>Small Interpretive Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline topographic map with trail • Desert hiking/protocol • Leave No Trace/Tread Lightly 	<p>Trailside Interpretive Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native American local history • Early village named Yaga • Sites of historic hot springs 	<p>Overlook Panorama Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common geographical features within visible range
<p>6 <i>Hot Springs Trailhead</i></p>	<p>Amargosa River ACEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background • Amargosa vole and habitat • Marsh habitats and associated birds 	<p>Hot Springs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsurface water flow • Causes of hot springs • Associated sensitive habitat • Local spring history 	<p>Prehistoric and Historic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Native American history • Transportation along the river; then and now
<p>7 <i>Tecopa Basin Wayside Exhibit</i></p>	<p>Large Area Map Panel, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, places, sites to see • Local services • Wilderness boundaries and corridors • OSNHT • Amargosa Wild and Scenic River • T&T, twenty mule team route 	<p>Historic Mining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amargosa Borax Works and relation to Death Valley • Twenty mule team, springs, and feed • Regional mining history 	<p>Amargosa River ACEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free flowing WSR • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background • American Indian trails, OSNHT, T&T
<p>8 <i>Shoshone Wayside Exhibit</i></p>	<p>Large Area Map Panel, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, places, sites to see • Local services • Wilderness boundaries/corridors • OSNHT • Amargosa Wild & Scenic River • T&T, twenty mule team route 	<p>Travel Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose for restrictions • Access opportunities and regulations • Route signing strategy 	<p>None</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">9 <i>California Valley Wayside Exhibit</i></p>	<p>Wilderness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local wilderness areas: Kingston, Resting Spring Ranges, and Ibex • Philosophy and benefits • Wilderness dos and don'ts • Kingston Mountains and Needles Field Office opportunities 	<p>OSNHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial 1829 Antonio Armijo route • Comparison to Mojave Road route • Mule travel/equipment/navigation 	<p>Amargosa River ACEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free flowing WSR • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background
<p style="text-align: center;">10 <i>Emigrant Pass Wayside Exhibit</i></p>	<p>OSNHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1844 Freemont Trip • 1847 Mormon Battalion • 1848 first wagon Emigrants • San Bernardino-Salt Lake Road, Mormon Road 	<p>Wilderness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and meaning of designation • Philosophy and benefits • Wilderness dos and don'ts 	<p>Amargosa River ACEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free flowing WSR • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background
<p style="text-align: center;">11 <i>Bon Mesa Overlook</i></p>	<p>Brief description of China Ranch Canyon morphology, age, and creation</p>	<p>Brief overview of local geography, and its relevance and importance to mining history</p>	<p>Possible route of initial 1829 Antonio Armijo travels on OSNHT</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">12 <i>Badlands Overlook</i></p>	<p>Brief description of tertiary China Ranch beds; the badlands morphology, age, and creation</p>	<p>Panorama sign describing regional landmarks in viewshed</p>	<p>None</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">13 <i>Death Valley Junction Wayside Exhibit</i></p>	<p>BLM Wild horse program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and meaning of designation • Philosophy and benefits • Wilderness dos and don'ts 	<p>Amargosa River ACEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free flowing WSR • Sensitive/riparian habitat • T&E species • Geologic background • American Indian trails, OSNHT, and T&T 	<p>Travel Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access opportunities and regulations • Purpose for restrictions • Route signing strategy

Maintenance Note: Selection of any of the alternatives includes the follow-up action to complete routine maintenance. This includes work on all related existing and new structures, access roads and trail improvements.