



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office

P.O. Box 581260

690 W. Garnet Avenue

N. Palm Springs, CA 92258

www.ca.blm.gov/palmsprings

IN REPLY REFER TO:

2700P

(CA-066.69)

Dave Doherty
Patrol Agent In Charge
U.S. Border Patrol
El Cajon Field Station
225 Kenney Street
El Cajon, CA 92020

Subject: Letter of Authorization
for Way Improvements within Hauser Mountain Wilderness Study Area

Dear Mr. Doherty:

By means of this letter, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office is allowing the United States Border Patrol (USBP) administrative access to improve portions of two existing ways within the Hauser Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA). This action is consistent with BLM's requirements under Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands under Wilderness Review (BLM Manual H-855-1), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 2809). This action is in response to a written request received on September 16, 2005 by facsimile from the USBP. An environmental assessment (CA-660-06-01) was prepared analyzing the environmental impacts of this action. In light of the exigent situation requiring prompt action to address clear public and resource safety issues and under the limitations identified in the USBP's short-term proposal, the BLM concluded that this short-term action is consistent with our requirements under FLPMA, NEPA, the IMP and other applicable regulations.

The USBP is authorized to improve portions of two existing routes (identified by the USBP as "Route 1" and "Route 3") within the Hauser Mountain Wilderness Study Area, located in south-central San Diego County, California. Improvement work will be performed by USBP in conjunction with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). The routes are located within the following Township, Range and Sections:

Route 1: T. 17 S., R. 4 E., Section 36 SW1/4SW1/4; T. 18 S., R. 4 E., Section 1 NW1/4NW1/4, and SW1/4SE1/4; SBBM.

Route 3: T.18 S., R. 4 E., Section 1 W1/2SE1/4; T. 18 S., R. 5 E., Section 7 SW1/4NW1/4; SBBM.

All work is to be completed 30 days from the date of this letter of authorization. All improvements and maintenance to the two existing routes will be done with the least possible impact within the WSA. All work on the routes will remain within the existing footprint with the exception of points along the road where the existing roadbed is insufficient to fill ruts. At these sites, which will be approved by an on-site BLM project inspector, some fill dirt will need to be scraped from the immediate edge of the existing roadbed. BLM and project proponents estimate no more than ten sites where this will be necessary. The equipment used will consist of a bulldozer operated by CDF to fill in deep ruts created by erosion due to heavy rains, and a USBP road grader to smooth the surface. The equipment may also be used to cut water bars across the route in an effort to control future erosion. Water bars will not extend outside the existing footprint and must be aligned with natural drainages. Installation of culverts, concrete ditches, or any other erosion control structures is not authorized at this time. Equipment will be washed before arriving at the project site to minimize spread of noxious weeds.

It will also be necessary to trim back brush no more than six feet from the edge of the route that has grown out into the roadway due to little or no vehicle traffic in almost a year. Trimming of the brush will be accomplished with hand tools only to minimize impacts to wilderness values. Individual trees and shrubs will not be completely removed in an effort to maintain a natural appearance.

No new construction beyond what is currently in place is authorized. As a follow up to this authorization, the BLM will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the environmental impacts of long-term road maintenance of the aforementioned ways. Installation of turn-around areas, and more extensive waterbars, culverts, concrete ditches, or any other erosion control structures may be analyzed as to their conformance with the IMP at that time as well.

The Bureau of Land Management appreciates the cooperation of the U.S. Border Patrol in managing the public lands in San Diego County. If you have any questions regarding this authorization, please contact Ms. Janaye Byergo at 858-451-1767.

Sincerely,

Gail Acheson
Field Manager