

Finding of No Significant Impact

Geotech for BLM-FHWA Red Rock Canyon NCA Scenic Drive Road Improvement Project

DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2013-0013-EA

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2013-0013-EA, dated 02/14/2014. After consideration of the environmental effects as described in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed action identified in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared.

I have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the approved Resource Management Plan for Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, May 10, 2005 (RMP) and is consistent with applicable plans and policies of county, state, tribal and Federal agencies. This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

Context:

The Geotech for U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD) Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA) Scenic Loop Drive Improvement Project is a site-specific action with borings and seismic analysis occurring within Clark County, NV on lands managed by the BLM.

The lands proposed for geotechnical investigation are managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The land is located in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA). The Proposed Action is in conformance with the RMP which provide a framework for indicating the management intent for evaluating the appropriateness of future actions and proposals. The Proposed Action will support BLM staff with designing future roadway improvements.

Intensity:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The EA has considered both the beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. The proposed action would provide benefits to the NCA by providing geotechnical analysis in support of future roadway improvements. The proposed project may have minor short term impacts to migratory birds and threatened and endangered animal species; however, by following the minimization measures described in the EA (Ch. 2: Description of the Proposed Action), and complying with the mitigation measures identified (Ch. 4 of the EA), potential impacts are expected to be negligible.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The proposed action is likely to have negligible effects to public health and safety as the proposed action includes regulatory, compliance, and minimization measures, including those for air quality and hazardous wastes, to ensure potential impacts to public health and safety are minimized.

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

The proposed action would occur in the NCA. Although unique characteristics exist within the Red Rock Canyon NCA, no unique characteristics were identified in the Geotech for BLM-FHWA Red Rock Canyon NCA Scenic Drive Road Improvement Project EA. In addition the project would not affect unique characteristics in the surrounding NCA areas.

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

The effects of the proposed action on the quality of the human environment are unlikely to be controversial. The geotechnical investigation is in support of resource protection and public safety. A public meeting was held and no controversy or concern was expressed by those in attendance.

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

Geotech boring and seismic testing are standard exploration processes in the preliminary stages of road and bridge design. They are designed to target specific core areas and try to have minimal intrusion to the landscape. By following the Standard Operating Procedures of the geotech and seismic testing processes, complying with federal, state and local regulations, and following the minimization and mitigation measures identified in the EA, uncertainty or unknown risks are expected to be low.

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 Proposed Action is similar to previous Geotech exploration in the NCA. The Proposed Action is within the scope of the Resource Management Plan and is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions. It would allow for site specific Geotech exploration for future infrastructure improvements to road and low water crossing that would be analyzed in future NEPA documents and are not expected to have significant impacts.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

There are no significant cumulative effects on the environment, either when combined with the effects created by past and concurrent projects, or when combined with the effects from natural changes taking place in the environment or from reasonably foreseeable future projects.

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

The proposed action will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP. It will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

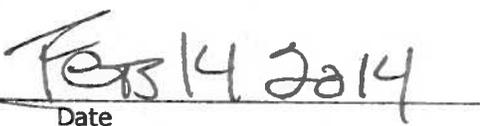
9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.*

The planning area includes habitat for the threatened desert tortoise. The EA has identified that no significant or adverse impacts would result to this species or its habitat from implementation of the proposed action. Design features and minimization measures are included in the proposed action to minimize and avoid impacts to the species and it was concluded there was a "not likely to effect" determination.

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Signed:

Mark Spencer
Red Rock/Sloan Field Office Manager

Date