

## **Finding of No Significant Impact**

### **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Proposed Scenic Loop Drive and Parking Areas Improvements Project**

DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2015-0002-EA

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2015-0002-EA, dated 08/19/2015. 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 U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA-CFLHD) Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) Proposed Scenic Loop Drive and Parking Areas Improvements Project consists of the following elements:

- A return route on a new alignment connecting Sandstone Quarry to the Visitor Center, thereby allowing visitors accessing RRCNCA amenities along the first 3 miles of Scenic Loop Drive to exit the area without having to travel the remaining 10 miles of Scenic Loop Drive.
- Twelve parking areas would be expanded or improved to better accommodate visitors.
- Pavement rehabilitation along the existing Scenic Loop Drive would consist of pulverizing the existing pavement and recycling the pulverized material for a new roadway surface.
- Signage would be added along Scenic Loop Drive to improve vehicle and bicycle movements in and out of parking areas, and to deter on-street parking. In addition, signage and bike lane striping would be added to SR 159 to better facilitate vehicle and bicycle movement from SR 159 onto Scenic Loop Drive.
- Improvements to secondary roads would include pavement rehabilitation on Moenkopi Road and Rocky Gap Road, and a paving/ditch grading/grade raise combination on White Rock Road and Oak Creek Road.

The lands encompassing the Proposed Action are managed by the BLM and located within RRCNCA. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the RMP, which provides a framework for indicating the

management intent for evaluating the appropriateness of future actions and proposals. The Proposed Action will not preclude future roadway improvements within RRCNCA.

**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 RRCNCA by improving safety, reducing operations and maintenance costs, protecting and conserving resources, and improving visitor experience. The proposed project may have minor adverse impacts; 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 will improve safety for vehicles, bicyclists, equestrians, and pedestrians. In addition, the Proposed Action includes regulatory, compliance, and minimization measures 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 within RRCNCA. Although unique characteristics exist within the RRCNCA, the Proposed Action would avoid sensitive sites. In addition the project would not affect unique characteristics in the surrounding RRCNCA 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 Proposed Action is in support of resource protection and public safety.

The Draft EA was available for public comment from June 16 through July 16, 2015. The BLM held two public meetings (afternoon and evening) on June 30, 2015 at the RRCNCA Visitor Center. Approximately 100 comments were received, the majority of which were in support of the project. Comments received during the public comment period are included as an appendix in the EA.

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

The construction methods employed as part of the Proposed Action are industry standard construction practices. By 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 being completed within existing authorities, policies and regulations and does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent

a decision in principle about a future consideration. The Proposed Action is within the scope of the RMP.

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 federally threatened desert tortoise. The EA has identified that no significant 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.

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:**



Catrina Williams  
Red Rock/Sloan Field Office Manager

8/19/15  
Date