

**Environmental Assessment:
Programmatic Commercial
Guide and Special Event
Services for Red Rock Canyon
Core**

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Identifying Information:

1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project:

Commercial Guide Services for Red Rock Canyon Core, DOI-BLM-NV-S020-2010-0014-EA

1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:

Mount Diablo Prime Meridian T. 21 S., R. 58 E., sections 1, 4; T 20 S., R. 58 E., sections 33, 35; T. 22 S., R. 58 E., sections 11-14, 23-26, 34-36; T. 22 S., R. 59 E., section 7, 8, 16-21, 28-30, 32, 33; T. 23 S., R., 58 E., sections 1-3, 11, 13, 14, 23-26, 35, 36; T. 23 S., R. 59 E., sections 5, 7, 8, 18

1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Lead Office - Red Rock - Sloan Canyon NCA FO and number LLNVS02000

1.1.4. Identify the subject function code, lease, serial, or case file number:

LLNVS02000

Case file number

1.1.5. Applicant Name:

Various

1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:

The Purpose of this Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) is for issuing Special Recreation Permits in the Central or Core Red Rock Canyon N.C.A. Trails system (RRCNCA) including the scenic drive, Red Spring Calico basin area, facilities along Hwy 159 including the Dedication Overlook, Scenic Drive Exit, Old Oak Creek , First Creek , Moenkopi Road . SRP's are authorizations, which allow for specific recreational uses of public land where a permit is required. They may be issued as a means to control visitor use, protect resources or as a mechanism to accommodate, specific recreational use which is commercial or organized group use. The need for the proposed action would be to satisfy public demands for commercial, competitive, organized group, and event SRP's in the core Red Rock Canyon NCA area.

At present there are 4 separate Environmental Assessments (EA) utilized to cover activities in the above listed sites. These include NV —50—2008—134 SRP solely on the Scenic Drive, Visitor Center, the Dedication overlook on Hwy 159, and Red Spring, NV-050—06-69 for Commercial Hiking and walking events, NV-050—2003—246 for commercial rock climbing guide services, and NV-050—2003—96 for SRP (Guest permits) for rock climbing. This programmatic would update those which it has been over 7 years since they were analyzed, include permit types which were not originally analyzed in these EA's. and consolidate the preparation of EA's for similar projects to facilitate focused involvement.

1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

The Proposed action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan for RRCNCA, which was approved May 20, 2005. The RMP identifies that a broad range of outdoor recreational opportunities will continue to be provided for the public. The consolidation of the preparation of EA's for similar projects to facilitate focused public and staff involvement will aid in the scoping of this action.

Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:

The purpose of this action is to provide areas within the RRCNCA for multiple recreation opportunities to meet current and future demands, clarify areas within and outside the developed scenic drive areas which will be available, and streamline the permitting process. These commercial and organized group activities would be on designated trails and facilities as defined in the Red Rock Canyon Resource Management Plan (RMP). The proposed programmatic would provide opportunities for interested locals and tourists to experience RRCNCA with guided recreational tours, and events.

The charts below list the types of SRP's which could be issued and the maximum amount which would be covered in this Programmatic EA. Other permits may be considered, however they would be processed through a separate Environmental Analysis.

Table 2.1. Commercial Ongoing SRP's in Core Red Rock Canyon

Recreational Opportunities	Number of permits allowed in RMP	Number of Tours allowed per day	Number of bicycles/ vehicles/horses/hikers per tour
4 X 4 (OHV) guided tours (Rocky Gap Road)	4	2	5 vehicles
Mountain Hike/Road guided tours	4	2	12 bicycles
Bus Tours	not defined	No limit	50
Motorcycle/Scooter	Not defined	8	10
Rock Climbing- "Guest" (limited to two 5 day or one 10 day period/yr)	Indicated but not defined	5	12
Rock climbing- Full Time	5	2/area	12 per area
Hiking guided tours	5	2	12 hikers
Hunting	not defined	0	not permitted in core area
Equestrian- Full time (Blue Diamond Mesa to be covered in separate EA)	3	8	40
Equestrian- Guest Permits (Scenic Drive exit)	not defined	1	200
Yoga/ fitness	not defined	1	12 hikers
Weddings (159 Overlook, Red Spring Boardwalk, Sandstone Quarry (not defined	5	50 or less

Artistic	not defined	1	12 clients
Camping	Not defined	2 group sites	50

Table 2.2. Competitive SRP's

Recreational Opportunities	number of permits allowed per year	Maximum number of participants allowed per event
Foot Races	5	500
Rock Climbing	2	200
Poker Runs	5	50
Duel Sport- Rocky Gap	2	50
Equestrian- Rocky Gap	1	50
Vehicle- Mt. Bike / motorcycle(not speed events)	2	100

Table 2.3. Event SRP's (non-Competitive)

Recreational Opportunities	Number of permits per year	Number of vehicles per event (V) / number of participants (P)
Foot- on Scenic Drive	5	500 (P)
Hiking- Organized groups not educational	10	50 (P)
Mt. Climbing- Organized groups	5	12/ group per area , 10 days per permit total, 50 per permit (P)
Bicycle	5	500 (V)
Vehicle / community	5	125(P)
4 X 4 community	5	10 (V)
Equestrian	2	300 (P)
Group Use Picnic- Other (Willow Spring, Overlook, Off Season campground)	24	50/event (P)
Group Use Picnic- Red Spring	300	50/event (P)
Vehicle- educational	50	100 (P)
Wedding	12	20

Commercial On Going SRP's

Guided 4X4 (OHV) tours: Tours would be limited to four ongoing SPR's per year Tours would be limited to two tours per day per permit with not more than five vehicles per tour. Vehicles would be limited to 15 miles / hour on the Rocky Gap Road. One of these commercial permits may be utilized for Organized group permits for special / one day events not to exceed 5 per year.

Guided Mountain Bike tours: Tours would be limited to four ongoing SRP's per year. Tours would be limited to two tours per day with no more than 12 mountain/road bikes per tour, including guides.

Guided Hiking Tours: Tours would be limited to 5 ongoing SRP's per year. Tours would be limited to two tours per day with no more than 12 participants per area, which includes guides.

One of these commercial permits may be utilized for Organized group permits for special one day events not to exceed 10 per year.

Commercial Mt. Climbing: Full Time permits would be limited to 5 with a limit of two tours per day / area and 10 clients per area/tour. If more clients per day are needed, the permittee must contact the BLM Red Rock ORP to confirm this in advance.

Commercial Rock Climbing- Guest permits: Guest permits would be limited to 8 per year. Each permittee would be limited to 10 days or two 5 day periods per year for one year. there is not a guaranteed consecutive year renewal.

Commercial Weddings : Permits would be limited to 2 full time permits. Each permit would be limited to three area in the Conservation Area, Red Spring Board Walk, Dedication Overlook, and Red Rock Wash Overlook. Red Spring and the Dedication Overlook would permit a maximum of two 2 hour periods per day with a maximum of 50 guests. Red Rock wash overlook would be limited to two 2 hour periods per day with a maximum of 15 clients and two vehicles. Permits would include still photography. Videography would require an additional permit from the Las Vegas Field Office.

Commercial Equestrian : Full Time tours are limited to 3 Conservation Area wide. They each have defined areas. At this time none are in the areas considered under this permit.

Commercial — Guest Equestrian would be limited to 1 per month. This would be limited to 50 hours and guest per event. Staging must be at the Scenic Drive Exit parking, or Red Rock Campground Group sites ONLY if campground is not open for other uses. If staging is from private land a maximum of 50 guest /or horse per day would be allowed. Participants would be limited to existing designated equestrian trails and dirt roads.

Commercial Street Legal Motorcycle/Scooter- tours: These would be limited to four permits per year. Each tour would be limited to 2 tours per day with a maximum of 20 guests per tour.

Commercial 4 X 4 tours include cars/truck/motorcycles: They must be street legal. These are limited to 4 full time tours. Currently there are only 3 permitted tour groups.

Commercial Yoga/ Fitness Tours: Currently this is one yoga permittee. This be increased to two. No more than one tour per day with no more than 12 total participants. Participants would be limited to Calico Basin and Sandstone Quarry area.

Artistic: There are no current permits at this time. Under this EA. up to 2 permits could be issued. These would primarily be for classes/workshop type of opportunities not for educational purposes by formal educational institutes. Paint, photography, and sculpture could be included. Participants would utilize existing trails and facilities. They would not leave any material behind. No more the 1 tour per day with up to 12 participants each.

Commercial use of Group Campground: This would be limited to a maximum of 2 group sites per day with a 14 day limit no more than 2 times per year This could be used in combination with hiking, Mt. biking, Rock Climbing, or other uses which are not in conflict with the RMP. Groups must not utilize this permit for day use of the campground unless the campground is not normally open to the public. No catering or vending is covered under this permit.

Staging and Support:

All tours would be limited to designated roads and trails in the Central Red Rock system, including the scenic drive, Rocky Gap Road, Highway 159 from Moenkopi Road to First Creek Trail head, as specified in the RMP. If other trails are designated, applicants may apply to utilize these at the discretion of the B.L.M. No cross-country travel would be permitted.

Permittees will be responsible for set up, staging, monitoring, damage control, tear down, and clean-up of any resource in the Conservation Area they use or are adjacent to. They will be responsible for providing adequate facilities for their clients and for the public. If the permittees use existing facilities, they will provide for the maintenance, cleaning, and supplies used during the duration of the permit, including pumping of pit toilets after an event, using their own contractor.

All vehicle parking and event staging would be conducted at developed or designated parking areas. No parking will be allowed off road. No commercial vehicles will be staged at areas not specified in the permittees SRP. Staging may be permitted at the Red Rock Campground only as approved by the BLM when there are no other conflicts.

Competitive SRP's

Foot Races and Poker run events Utilizing the Scenic Drive: These would be limited to five SRP's per year with no more than 5000 participants per race.

Foot Races events utilizing trails and non paved roads: These would be limited to two SRP's per year with no more than 300 participants per race.

Staging and Facilities All vehicle parking and event staging would be conducted at the Entrance Station Parking area, Visitor Center Parking, Dedication Overlook Parking, Red Spring Parking or the Scenic Drive Parking. No trails in wilderness areas would be authorized.

Competitive Rock Climbing:

While not addressed in the ROD for the RMP, it could be a permitted event. Competitive events would be limited to one event per year and only permitted during the November- February or May through August. No more than 20 competitors/area/event and 30 spectators per area/event. Events would not be able to take place in Wilderness Areas and limited to the non-wilderness areas. Maximum number of participants, vendors, event staff, and spectators are not to exceed 1000 within the Conservation Area. Maximum number of locations would be 10. Special stipulations will be developed as part of the Climbing Management Plan specific to Competitive Climbing. Proponents will be encouraged to utilize off-site facilities for vending, seminars, and other large group events related to this SRP.

EVENT SRP's (non-competitive): These could include and are not limited to Organized Groups, family reunions, Scouting and community groups.

All foot and bike noncompetitive events Scenic Drive: These will be limited to five SRP's per year. The number of participants are limited to 500 persons on the scenic drive simultaneously not including various challenge levels. The maximum allowed amount of participants for these events are 1000 participants per event.

Organized Group use including community and non-educational groups utilizing Trails: These include clubs, family groups, meet-ups, community centers, church groups and other not for profits groups. This covers visits which do not charge or for costs of the trip which only pay

for the trip itself, gas, vehicle rental. No compensation for services or fund raising would be covered in this section. No public advertising for the event would be allowed. There would be a maximum of 15 persons per area with at least 20 minutes between groups. No more than 75 person per day. Only 1/2 of available parking per trail head would be permitted.

Motored non-competitive events Scenic Drive and developed sites.:These will be limited to 5 SRP's per year. Number of participants are limited to 300 persons on the drive simultaneously. Events will not go into Wilderness Areas.

Equestrian non-competitive event: These will be limited to 5 SRP's per year, Number of participants are limited to 50 persons and horses. Events will no go into Wilderness areas and stay on designated equestrian trails. The Scenic Drive Exit parking area and Red Rock Campground during non public use time are the only area covered in this permit. If other areas are designated and/or developed by the BLM, these can be incorporated into this programmatic.

Guest Climbing permits / Education/Organized Group: Permits would be limited to 5 per year with a limit of 10 days per year. This could be 2 five day visits or one ten day visit. The ROC requires us to work cooperatively with school programs. This limit would be in addition to the commercial Guest Climbing permits.

Non commercial Wedding permits: Each permit would be limited to three areas in the Conservation Area, Red Spring Board Walk, Dedication Overlook, and Red Rock Wash Overlook. Red Spring Board Walk and the Dedication Overlook would be limited to two 2 hour periods per day which a maximum of 20 participants and 10 vehicles Permits would include still photography. A video-grapher, not part of the wedding party relations, would require additional permit form the lands office

Red Spring Group Picnic Area:This would be a maximum of one four hour period per day with a maximum of 50 visitor/period. Reservation fees and assigned site fees may be required.

Willow Spring and Dedication Overlook Picnic Areas by organized groups:There would be a maximum of one four hour period per day with a maximum of 50 visitors/ period. Reservation , assigned site fees, and trash/ cleaning fees may be required for requests beyond the 4 hour period.

Group Camping and off season use of Campgrounds group camp sites at Red Rock Campground are the only group camping covered by this Proposal . If the campground is not open for general public use, the group sites may be available . Applicants will be responsible for cleaning, pumping toilets, trash removal, and any extra security required for use of this site. Should a Plan for the Oliver Ranch area be complete which allows for overnight or group day use, this would be incorporated into this EA as specified in the plan.

Organized Group use including Community and non-educational institutions Off-Road:These include 4X4 clubs, family groups, and other non-commercial groups Greater than 15 individuals and 5 vehicles. These would be limited to no more than 10 vehicles per day per area. Street Legal vehicles only.

2.2. Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail:

Under the No-Action Alternative a single environmental assessment to analyze multiple SRPs in the Red Rock Canyon Core area would not be approved and individual environmental assessments would be written for each SRP proposed.

2.3. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

There where no other alternatives considered or analyzed in detail.

2.4. Conformance

The EA is in conformance with the NV - Red Rock Canyon NCA Resource Management Plan approved: May 20, 2005, under the following management directions.

(5A) Special Recreation Permits

5A.1 Commerical uses have grown steadily in the last five years. In order to avoid establishing use patterns that might be detrimental to the RRCNCA, and to give a benchmark for analysis, initiak allocations of commercial permits will be established as listed below. As monitoring results are evaluated, the number of permits could increase or decrease in the future. Initial permit allocations will be as follows:

5.1a)Rock Climbing Guides and Schools

5 year— round permits

“guest” permits (number to be determined in climbing plan)

5A1.b) Guided Horse Ride Operations

3 permits (no trail/use area overlap between permittees)

5A.1c) Bus and Limo Tour Operations(on Scenic Drive, no interpretation or hiking)

No limits on number of tours

5A.1d)4X4 Vehicle Tour Operations(on designated roads)

4 permits

5A.1e) Guided Bike Tours

4 permits(includes mountain bike and road bike tours)

5A.1f) Guided Interpretive Hikes

5 permits

5A.2 New types of commercial uses proposed will be evaluated to determine if they are appropriate and consistent with RRCNCA management guidelines.

5A.3 The Bureau of Land Management will work in cooperation with local agencies and schools in the Clark County vicinity to further management directives. The administration of such agreements will be at the discretion of the National Conservation Area Manager. Agreements determined to fall under this category will not be deducted from the limits set for the previously mentioned categories.

Chapter 3. Affected Environment:

A detailed description of the of the affected environment is contained in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan.

The table below summarizes the environmental attributes that have been reviewed, whether they may be affected by the Proposed Action, and the rationale for that determination. Elements that would not be affected will not be discussed further in this environmental assessment.

Table 3.1.

Supplemental Authority	Not Present	Present/Not Affected	Present/Affected	Rationale
Air Quality		X		Not Carried forward for analysis.
Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	X			Resource not present. The proposed project area is not within an ACEC or any critical desert tortoise habitat.
BLM Natural Areas	X			Resource not present.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions		X		Currently there are no emission limits for suspected Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and no technically defensible methodology for predicting potential climate changes from GHG emissions. However, there are, and will continue to be, several efforts to address GHG emissions from federal activities, including BLM authorized uses.

Cultural/ Historical		X		All tours will be lead along designated routes. Other than archaeological sites open for interpretation, all archaeological sites, including rock art sites will be avoided.
Environmental Justice	X			No issues
Farmlands Prime or Unique	X			The proposed area does not include prime or unique farmlands.
Noxious Weeds/Invasive Non-native Species		X		Carried forward for analysis. All vehicles and personnel both commercial and client will be examined by proponent and cleaned free of vegetation and soil before travel to meeting sites or trailheads. A secondary cleaning is required upon exit from each site to facilitate weed control. Commercial proponents have and obligation to report site weed infestations to BLM personnel to aid in protecting the resources.

Native American Religious Concerns	X			No Native American concerns have been identified in the RMP that relates to this type of undertaking, if the proponent adheres to using only routes that have been designated by the BLM.
Floodplains		X		All events will occur on designated roads and trails. Trails are not located within FEMA designated floodplains. No impacts to downstream flooding effects.
Riparian/Wetlands		X		All events will occur on designated roads and trails. No impacts to riparian areas.
Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Animal Species		X		The proposed action has a no affect determination on the threatened desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>). This project will have no affect on any other federally listed species or designated critical habitat. The BLM sensitive species banded gila monster and chuckwalla may be present

				in the general area. Tortoises that may be present are likely present only in very low densities.
Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status	X			Threatened and endangered plant species are not present. BLM special status plants may be present along and adjacent to the trails. Because the proposed activities would remain on existing roads, trails and previously disturbed areas in the general area include potential impacts to small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. Additionally, the BLM sensitive species banded Gila monster and Chuckwalla may be present in the Red Rock BMP.
Plant Species		X		Wildlife species in the general area include potential impacts to small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. Additionally, the BLM sensitive species banded Gila monster and Chuckwalla may be present in the Red Rock BMP.
Paleontology			X	Wildlife species in the general area include potential impacts to small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. Additionally, the BLM sensitive species banded Gila monster and Chuckwalla may be present in the Red Rock BMP.
Fish and Wildlife Excluding Federally Listed Species			X	Wildlife species in the general area include potential impacts to small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. Additionally, the BLM sensitive species banded Gila monster and Chuckwalla may be present in the Red Rock BMP.
Floodplains			X	All guided tours will be along designated roads and trails. No impacts to downstream flooding.

Fuels/Fire Management		X		Follow fire restrictions as stated in the annual fire restrictions order.
Geology/ Minerals Resources/Energy Production		X		All permit activities that take place on pre-disturbed areas and trails will have no impacts with geology and minerals.
Hydrological Conditions		X		All guided tours will be along designated roads and trails. No impacts to local hydrologic conditions.
Migratory Birds		X		As there will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed action, there will be no impact on migratory birds. If climbing activities occur during raptor breeding season and participants encounter active nests, climbers will cease activity and avoid nesting areas until nestlings fledge and abandon the nest.
Lands/Access		X		Since all guided tours will be along designated roads and trails, there are no lands issues.

Livestock Grazing	X			Proposed tour area does not include an authorized grazing allotment.
Rangeland Health Standards		X		Proposed tour area is limited to existing and/or designated trails, there will not be additional surface disturbance with these activities.
Recreation			X	Carried forward for analysis. .
Socio-Economics		X		The proposed action would an opportunity to streamline workload and management for permitted activities in the Red Rock Canyon NCA that would be beneficial for the social recreation opportunities offered by commercial and special use permittees.
Waste-Hazardous/Solid	X			Not present
Water Resources Quality (drinking/surface /ground)		X		All events will occur on designated roads and trails. Trails should be monitored regularly to ensure that there is no increase in erosion and sedimentation resulting in degradation of water quality.

Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X		All guided tours will be along designated roads and trails. No new disturbance will occur. Trails located in or that traverse riparian areas and streams should be monitored regularly to ensure that the trails are not impacting them. No impacts to riparian areas.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X			Resource not present.
Wilderness/WSA		X		The proposed action is not located within or adjacent to WSAs. The proposed action is located in close proximity to Rainbow Mountain Wilderness. All Wilderness areas are open to uses consistent with preservation of their wilderness character and their future use and enjoyment as wilderness.
Areas with Wilderness Characteristics	X			The proposed action is located within areas evaluated for wilderness characteristics and were managed as WSAs. The areas were designated as Wilderness and added as units to the National

				Preservation System. Those areas not designated were released from section 603(c) of FLPMA and are managed for other uses in accordance with the current Red Rock RMP..
Forests and Rangelands		X		Cactus and yucca may be present along and adjacent to trails. Because the proposed activity will be confined to existing roads, trails and previously disturbed areas, the proposed activities would be negligible and would not require mitigation.
Human Health and Safety			X	There is a potential for participants to be injured during climbing, hiking, and competitive events.
Visual Resource Management		X		The proposed action occurs within VRM classes II, III, and IV. Please ensure that there is no new disturbance created as a result of these events and that all materials brought in for the events are removed. No issues.

<p>Vegetation Excluding Federally listed species</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>BLM special status plants may be present along and adjacent to the trails. Because the proposed activities would remain on existing roads, trails and previously disturbed areas potential impacts to BLM special status plants would be negligible and consistent with impacts to rare plants analyses in the Red Rock RMP.</p>
<p>Wild Horses and Burros</p>			<p>X</p>	<p>The proposed tour area is within a portion of the Red Rock Herd Management Area.</p>
<p>Woodland and Forestry</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>Cactus and yucca are considered government property and regulated under the BLM Nevada forestry program. Cactus and yucca may be present along and adjacent to trails. Because the proposed activity will be confined to existing roads, trails and previously disturbed areas, potential impacts would be negligible and</p>

				would not require mitigation.
Soils		X		All events will occur on designated roads and trails. Trails should be monitored regularly to ensure that there is no increase in erosion and sedimentation off the trails and that trails are not being degraded.

3.1. Air Quality

The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) is located within Clark County and most of the RRCNCA is located within the hydrographic Basin 212(designated air shed). Clark County has been designated by the U.S. EPA as “serious” nonattainment area for PM 10, (particulate matter having an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns or less), Ozone (O3) and Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Air Quality within the RRCNCA tends to be slightly better than the valley to the east; however, visibility and air quality are impacted by the proximity to the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Primary emissions within the RRCNCA are derived from mobile sources such as cars, light trucks, buses and motorcycles that utilize the “Scenic Drive” and other designated recreation areas. The NCA has experienced periodic wildfires.

Clark County Dept of Air Quality and Environmental Management(DAQEM) , the air quality compliance oversight agency has been delegated the authority, under the provision of the Nevada Revised Statue 445B.500 and by direction of the Clark County Board of Commissioners via the USEPA, to implement and enforce an air pollution control program in Clark County , Nevada. DAQEM applies and enforces the Air Quality Regulations, which establish requirements for sources who emit or release air contaminants into the atmosphere.

3.2. Noxious Weeds/InvasiveNon-native Species

All travel vectors have increased risks of introducing and transporting weeds. All vehicles and personnel both commercial and client will be examined by proponent and cleaned free of vegetation and soil before travel to meeting sites or trailheads. A secondary cleaning is required upon exit from each site to facilitate weed control. Commercial proponents have and obligation to report site weed infestations to BLM personnel to aid in protecting the resources.

3.3. Wild Horse and Burro

Wild horses and burros: The proposed tour areas includes portions of the Red Rock Herd Management Area (HMA). The Red Rock HMA encompasses approximately 160,000 acres of BLM public land and approximately 25,000 acres of USFS public land in Southern Clark county. The wild horses and burros generally rely on some portion of either the BLM or USFS public lands to provide their required habitat throughout the year. The 2010 wild horse and burro population estimate (adults only) for the Red Rock HMA is 35 wild horses and 54 wild burros.

3.4. Threatened, and Endangered Wildlife Species

The proposed action has a no affect determination on the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). This project will have no affect on any other federally listed species or designated critical habitat. The BLM sensitive species banded gila monster and chuckwalla may be present in the general area. Tortoises that may be present are likely present only in very low densities

3.5. Fish and Wildlife Excluding Federally Listed Species

The RRCNCA supports a rich community of nearly 300 diverse wildlife species. The project area supports wildlife characteristic of the north-eastern Mojave Desert. Biological diversity varies according to topography, plant community, and proximity to water, soil type, and season. Many of these species have adapted complex life strategies for survival in the desert environment.

Wildlife species in the general area include small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. Based on ecological sensitivity factors, groups of priority management concern are bats, raptors, reptiles and amphibians. The remaining RRCNCA wildlife group, carnivores and hoofed animals, represent a mix of unrelated species. Carnivores include foxes, coyotes, ringtails, badgers, bobcats and mountain lions.

Several common species of reptiles would be represented in the surrounding habitat types. These species include the western whip-tail (*Cnemidophorus tigris*), desert iguana (*Dipsosaurus dorsalis*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), zebra-tail lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*), desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), western shovel-nosed snake (*Chionactis occipitalis*) and garter snake (*Thamnophis* sp.).

Common bird species that would be represented include the rock wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), black-throated sparrow (*Amphispiza quinquestrata*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugea*).

Common mammal species include the black-tailed hare (*Lepus californicus*), and the desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*). Abundant evidence during the course site visit suggested the presence of common Mojave Desert rodent inhabitants such as cactus mice (*Peromyscus eremicus*), Merriam kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys merriami*) and species associated with rocky habitats including the wood rat (*Neotoma lepida*).

All of these species maintain dens and nest, hunt and forage, and rely on close ecological relationships to the habitat in which they live.

BLM Sensitive Wildlife Species

According to the definition of a BLM sensitive species the following sensitive species are known to potentially occur within the area adjacent to the project site: western burrowing owl, western chuckwalla and banded gila monster.

Western burrowing owl (*Athene cuniculari hypugaea*)

The Western burrowing owl is a diurnal bird of prey specialized for grassland and shrubsteppe habitats in western North America. The owls are widely distributed throughout the Americas and can be found from central Alberta, Canada to Tierra del Fuego in South America. Burrowing owl habitat typically consists of open, dry, treeless areas on plains, prairies, and desert floors. Burrowing owls most frequently use mammal burrows created by other animals such as prairie dogs (*Cynomys* spp.), ground squirrels (*Spermophilus* spp.), coyotes (*Canis latrans*) or desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*). The burrows are used for nesting, roosting, cover, and caching prey. In recent decades, the range and species count have been declining primarily due to agricultural, industrial, and urban development that reduce burrow availability.

Western chuckwalla (*Sauromalus obesus*)

The western chuckwalla is a Nevada state protected species that is found throughout the deserts of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Chuckwallas inhabit rocky outcrops where cover is available between boulders or in rock crevices, typically on slopes and open flats below 5,000 feet. Typical habitat includes rocky hillsides and talus slopes, boulder piles, lava bed, or other clusters of rock, usually in association Mojave Desert Shrub vegetation. This species requires shady, well-drained soils for nests. The chuckwalla is a widespread species, but is regionally limited by its requirement for rock outcrops. Chuckwallas likely occur within the project area, but would be localized on rock outcroppings.

Banded Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*)

The Gila monster is a large, heavy-bodied lizard with a massive head, a short thick tail, and short limbs with strong claws. It has flamboyant dorsal coloration of black and pink, orange, or yellow and occasionally exceeds 50 centimeters (19.7 inches) in total length. The Gila monster's range includes extreme southwestern Utah, southern Nevada, and adjacent southeastern California south through southern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and much of Sonora to Sinaloa, Mexico. Its habitat includes Mojave and Sonoran desert scrub, desert grassland, thorn scrub, and occasionally pine-oak woodland. Threats to this reptile include illegal collection, traffic fatalities, and most severe is habitat destruction from urban and agricultural development

3.6. Human Health and Safety

The Red Rock Canyon NCA is one of the top ten Mountain Climbing destinations and attracts participants world-wide with a variety of experiences. Climbing, even guided tours, have the potential to result in serious injury or death. Permitted events, and guides are required to maintain a higher level of guiding experience, which should mitigate the potential for this type of event. We have had no death of clients for our permitted activities since 2001.

Improper disposal of human waste can become an issue in high use areas which are far from BLM provided facilities. Permittees are required to dispose of all waste through approved "Leave No Trace" methods.

During competitive and organized group events, permissess will be required to put measures in place to try and reduce the potential of injuries by having a medical plan and Emergency Medical personal from Advanced First Aid to E.M.T. on site, depending on the type of event and time of year. Participants will be required to be advised of the presence of harmful animals, desert conditions, signs and symptoms of heat related problems, and what to do in case of emergency.

Participants and clients of permitted events and tours will be advised that the water in the National Conservation Area, except at the Visitor Center and campground, are NOT tested for drinking and should only be utilized with proper filtration or chemical processes in their own water containers. When possible, clients should bring their own safe drinking water.

3.7. Recreation

The majority of the event SRP's would occur during the high use periods (spring and fall). Although the area is not closed to casual recreational users during permitted events it may affect the users experience. Parking can be limited at the trailheads and the opportunity for solitude on the trail decreases during the permitted events. This action complies with the goals of the RRCNCA RMP and ROD which was approved May 2005. Permittee will be required to abide by the attached stipulations for Red Rock Canyon NCA. The events will be limited to the approved trails, crags, and developed picnic areas, and parking lots.

3.8. Wilderness /WSA

Wilderness is devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific educational, conservation and historical use. Commercial services may be performed within the wilderness to extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purpose of the areas. Furthermore, wilderness provides recreational opportunities, including foot and horse travel, while mechanical transport (e.g. bicycles) are prohibited. No buffers are created around wilderness although activities will occur on designated trails outside of the Wilderness. While the proposed action meets the public purposes for which wilderness areas are devoted it must be determined that such activities are minimum necessary for the administration of the area as Wilderness. The current Red Rock RMP provides direction on current allocation of SRPs, and any additional permit allocations within the Wilderness should be evaluated in a needs assessment. The proposed action does not permit bicycle use within either La Madre Mountain or Rainbow Mountain WA. The BLM prohibits engaging or participating in competitive use "including those activities involving physical endurance of a person or animal, foot races, survival exercises, war games, or other similar exercises" in Wilderness.

Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:

4.1. Proposed Action

4.1.1. Air Quality

4.1.2. Noxious Weeds/Invasive Non-native Species

All travel vectors have increased risks of introducing and transporting weeds.

4.1.3. Wild Horses and Burros

Wild horses and burros: The proposed action would not directly have an effect on wild horses and burros because they would avoid the tour areas during heavy use due to vehicle noise and the presence of humans. Wild horses and burros would not be restricted from forage or water due to the multiple locations of those resources throughout the Red Rock HMA. There would be no loss of forage and no impacts to the available forage within the HMA. At times, if in the vicinity of the tour areas wild horses and burros would be temporarily displaced from that area upon arrival of the first vehicle or person. Wild horses and burros would likely move a reasonable distance away from the heavily toured areas. Upon passage of the last tour vehicle or person, wild horses and burros would return to their normal ranges within the HMA. A collision between a vehicle and wild horse and/or burro is possible, but unlikely. In the unlikely event that there is a collision, the incident would need to be reported immediately to the BLM. Tour participants would be informed to not to harass (feed, pet, chase, etc.) wild horses and burros if encountered on or near the tour course and pit areas. The tour course should avoid the areas near Blue Diamond and the surrounding areas from March to June, this is the primary foaling season. Alternative routes in other portions of the Red Rock Core Area could be utilized during that portion of the year to reduce potential impacts and stress on the pregnant mares, jennies, and new foals. Also future gathers and removals will take place when it has been determined that there are excess wild horses and burros in the HMA. The tours will be temporarily suspended during these times to allow for a safe gather environment. The BLM will notify the tour operators prior to beginning gather operations.

4.1.4. Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species

The participants will be briefed by organizing officials on the desert tortoise concerns and monitored to ensure that all permittees do not create any new surface disturbance. Access to and from designated event areas is limited to existing roads and trails and no new surface or vegetation disturbance will occur. The proponent all participants must adhere to the special recreation permit stipulations to further ensure no impacts to desert tortoise. No impacts to desert tortoise or their habitat are expected to occur. Additionally, compliance with the special stipulations below will help to ensure that no affect to desert tortoises occurs

4.1.5. Fish And Wildlife Excluding Federally Listed Species

Wildlife

Wildlife species in the general area include small mammals, rodents, birds and reptiles. These species would be displaced as lands are disturbed within the project area. The primary direct

impact of the proposed action on wildlife would be killing or maiming of ground dwelling animals during construction and the loss of habitat. .

BLM Sensitive Wildlife Species

Western burrowing owl (*Athene cuniculari hypugaea*)

Potential western burrowing owl habitat occurs adjacent to the project area. Direct loss of individuals is not anticipated as the proposed action will create a nominal amount surface disturbance and will be protected by mitigation measures for migratory birds.

Banded gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*) and western chuckwalla (*Sauromalus obesus*)

Banded gila monster and western chuckwalla may be killed or injured if they wander into the area of activity.

4.1.6. Human Health and Safety

1. The permittees must assume responsibility for inspecting the permitted area for any existing or new hazardous conditions, e.g. trail and route conditions, land slides, avalanches, rocks, changing water or weather conditions, falling limbs that present risks for which the permittee assumes responsibility.
2. Permittee shall place signs and other warning devices as deemed necessary by the Authorizing Officer to warn the public of the action taking place.
3. The permittees must insure that first aid services provided at the events have the capability to insure that any accident victim may be located, treated, and evacuated as needed in a timely manner. A reliable communication system shall be provided by the permittee sufficient to provided immediate contact for the first aid provider (AFAor EMT) to local emergency dispatch centers (BLM or Metro).
4. The permittees must notify the authorized officer, in writing and verbally, of any accident that occurs while involved in activities authorized by this permit which result in : Death, personal injury requiring hospitalization or emergency evacuation, or in property damage greater than \$2,500. Reports should be submitted within 48 hours in the case of death or injury, or 10 days in accidents involving property damage.

4.1.7. Recreation

Trail widening and surface disturbance at designated staging areas could occur from passing during competitive events and use of staging locations. . Trail widening can increase erosion which could cause maintenance issues and affect the recreational experience of the trail. It could also contribute to potential conflicts between recreational users.

4.2. Alternatives

4.3. No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative separate Environmental Assessments would be prepared for each SRP, delaying events and Permits up to one year.

4.4. Cumulative Affects

4.4.1. Recreation

The Red Rock Canyon Core Trails System was designated for hiking, climbing, and limited equestrian use. The high use periods for casual recreational users occur during the spring and fall seasons.

The majority of the event SRPs would occur during the high use periods. Although the area is not closed to casual recreational users during permitted events it may affect the users experience. Parking can be limited at the trailheads and designated parking areas and the opportunity for solitude on the trail decreases during permitted events. Trail widening could occur from illegal passing during competitive foot. Trail widening can increase erosion which could cause maintenance issues and affect the recreational experience of the trail.

The proposed action could generate additional interest in the Red Rock Canyon Core/Central Trail System by exposing participants to the area that may not have been before. The additional recreation use could also contribute to trail widening and Base area widening for rock climbers or additional unauthorized trails being created. It could also increase the potential for conflicts between the recreational users.

BLM facilities could receive additional use and require additional maintenance.

Future planned projects include a multi-use trail system to be constructed between the scenic drive exit and entrance paralleling Hwy 159. This trail would be accessible for non-motorized use with separate sections for equestrian and other users. This trail system would help alleviate potential motorized vs non-motorized use along HWY 159. It would also increase access to areas currently not easily accessible and could result in unauthorized trails developing.

Other future actions foreseen include designation of trails in the Blue Diamond Mesa/Cowboy Trails area for use by hiking, mt. biking, and equestrian use. The would increase use of a little known area of the NCA. It would also allow other areas to receive less intensive use and provide other recreational opportunities sought out by current recreators. Increased use of this area would require additional maintenance and signing.

4.4.2. Wild Horse and Burros

Wild Horses and Burros-Off-road tours may increase the total use and human presence in the HMA, this increase has the potential to directly and indirectly impact the wild horses and burros. With increased human use there is the potential for more essential habitat loss, increased interactions with the wild horses and burros, and the potential to alter their normal foraging and

watering behaviors. However, these impacts should be limited under our current management and there should be little cumulative impacts to the wild horses and burros as a result of the activities associated with this race because of the small portion of the overall HMA and total habitat that is available in the Red Rock HMA.

4.5. Mitigation Measures

4.5.1. Air

Designated by the Gov. of the State of NV in Clark County requires under Section 92 of the Air Quality Regulations states, “Unpaved parking Lot” means any area of 5,000 square feet or larger that is not Paved and that is used for parking, maneuvering, or storing Motor Vehicles, equipment, or materials” be paved. Control Measures described in Subsection 92.2.1.2 must be implemented for all unpaved parking areas of 5,000 sq. ft. or less

4.5.2. Noxious Weeds / Invasion, Non-native Species

1. SRP events both guided and single events, it is mandatory that all equipment and personnel gear is clean and free of soil and vegetation before arrival on site.
2. In single events, an equipment check should be performed as a registration process, and a wash/cleaning station should be available for participants to clean their equipment before leaving the site and potentially bringing the weeds with them. Weeds shall be deposited in trash cans, bags, that the permittee provides.

4.5.3. Wild Horse and Burro

- 1) Tour participants would informed to not to harass (feed, pet, chase, etc.) wild horses and burros if encountered on or near the tour course and pit areas.
- 2) The tour course should avoid the areas near Blue Diamond and the surrounding areas from March to June, this is the primary foaling season. Alternative routes in other portions of the Red Rock Core Area could be utilized during that portion of the year to reduce potential impacts and stress on the pregnant mares, jennies, and new foals.
- 3) The tours will be temporarily suspended during gathers these times to allow for a safe gather environment. The BLM will notify the tour operators prior to beginning gather operations

4.5.4. Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species

- 1) A speed limit of 25 miles per hour shall be required for all vehicles travelling on the existing unpaved roads.
- 2) Should a desert tortoise enter the area of activity, all activity shall cease until such time as the animal has left the area of it's own accord.
- 3) Workers will be instructed to check underneath all vehicles before moving them as tortoises often take cover underneath parked vehicles.

- 4) Workers will be provided educational information on the desert tortoise which includes the legal protection and consequences for the violation of the Endangered Species Act. If a tortoise is observed, officials will ensure that participants do not harass the desert tortoise, or if a tortoise should wander into harm's way the event will cease until the animal moves out of harm's way on its own volitions.
- 5) All related trash will be contained and removed from the site at the conclusion of the event(s).
- 6) Workers will be instructed to stay on existing trails, and roads. No new trails will be constructed.

4.5.5. Health and Human Safety

1. The permittees must assume responsibility for inspecting the permitted area for any existing or new hazardous conditions, e.g. trail and route conditions, land slides, avalanches, rocks, changing water or weather conditions, falling limbs that present risks for which the permittee assumes responsibility.
2. Permittee shall place signs and other warning devices as deemed necessary by the Authorizing Officer to warn the public of the action taking place.
3. The permittees must insure that first aid services provided at the events have the capability to insure that any accident victim may be located, treated, and evacuated as needed in a timely manner. A reliable communication system shall be provided by the permittee sufficient to provide immediate contact for the first aid provider (AFA or EMT) to local emergency dispatch centers (BLM or Metro).
4. The permittees must notify the authorized officer, in writing and verbally, of any accident that occurs while involved in activities authorized by this permit which result in : Death, personal injury requiring hospitalization or emergency evacuation, or in property damage greater than \$2,500. Reports should be submitted within 48 hours in the case of death or injury, or 10 days in accidents involving property damage.

4.5.6. Recreation

1. BLM personnel will meet with each of the permittees at least once while the group will be visiting to ensure compliance with permit stipulations.
2. For full time permits the BLM staff will meet at least quarterly to ensure compliance.
3. Events would be limited to no more than once per month per location to allow for other users to utilize the area without scheduled events.
4. During the peak rock climbing season (Oct 1– Dec 1 & March 1– May 1) rock climbing permittees would be restricted on the amount of clients per location per wall to allow for general public use.
5. Group size of hiking, climbing, Mt. Biking, and equestrian groups per guide per location would be limited to no more than 12 unless permission is granted by an authorized BLM representative.

4.5.7. Migratory Species

If climbing activities occur during raptor breeding season and participants encounter active nests, climbers will cease activity and avoid nesting areas until nestlings fledge and abandon the nest.

Chapter 5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

Only an internal review was conducted.

Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Shawnee Hinman, Special Uses Team	U.S.D.A. Forest Service Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Humboldt-Toiyabe NF	The BLM and Forest Service will coordinate when SRP activities cross both administered lands.
Enter Name		

Chapter 6. List of Preparers

Table 6.1. List of Prepares

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document
Sendi Kalic	Wilderness Planner	Wilderness
Lisa Christianson	Environmental Protection Specialist	Air Quality
Mark Boatwright	Archeologist	Cultural Resources/Native American Concerns
Sarah Peterson	Hydrologist	Riparian/Soils/Floodplains
Nora Caplette	Natural Resource Specialist	Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds
Fred Edwards	Botanist	Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Plant Species
Krystal Johnson	Wild Horse & Burro Specialist	Wild Horse & Burro/Grazing/Range Land
Lorri Dee Dukes	Geologist	Geology
Lee Kirk	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Amelia Savage	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Animal Species
Kerri-Anne Thorpe	Realty Specialist	Lands/Access
Susan Farkas	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Environmental Coordinator
Lauren Brown	Restoration Ecologist	Visual Resource Management