

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: California Department of Fish and Game
Inland Deserts Region
4665 Lampson Avenue, Suite J
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in Compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

PROJECT TITLE: Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Environmental Assessment: Research and Recovery Actions

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER: 2011064007

LEAD AGENCY: California Department of Fish and Game ("CDFG")

CONTACT: Kimberly Nicol, (562) 430-7212

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: Not Applicable
CONTACT:

PROJECT LOCATION: The project is located within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in Tulare and Fresno counties.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The National Park Service (NPS), in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Inyo National Forest, (Inyo NF) is proposing to conduct population monitoring, research, and translocation of federally endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis sierra*) within Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI). These activities are being proposed primarily to facilitate meeting the goals of the Recovery Plan for Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep (hereafter, Recovery Plan; USFWS 2007) but also to inform the development of a new Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (WSP/EIS) for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

The project activities, including helicopter-supported capture of bighorn sheep with net-guns, would be conducted primarily in wilderness areas of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Bighorn sheep movements would be remotely monitored using Very High Frequency (VHF) radio-transmitters and Geographic Positioning System (GPS) collars. Researchers would also collect complementary data on meadow habitat characteristics and responses of bighorn sheep to wilderness recreation (packstock presence and grazing and visitor activity). Results from these projects would directly aid in planning and implementing actions identified as necessary to enable the recovery of this endangered species.

This is to advise that CDFG, acting as a lead agency under CEQA, has approved the project described above on 10/19/11, and has made the following determinations regarding the project described above:

1. The project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. An Environmental Assessment was prepared for this project in lieu of a mitigated negative declaration pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. Copies of the document have been examined at the lead agency (see above).

3. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was not adopted for this project.
5. No environmental filing fees are being submitted, as the Department of Fish and Game is undertaking the project (Fish and Game Code, Section 711.4).

The final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SEKISHEEP> or Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, 47050 Generals Hwy., Three Rivers, CA 93271.

Signature: Kimberly Nicol Date: 10/19/11
Name & Title: Kimberly Nicol, Regional Manager

Date received for filing at OPR: _____