MEMORANDUM

To: Associate District Manager, California Desert District

Through: Deputy District Manager, Division of Resources, California Desert District

From: District Archaeologist, California Desert District (CAD000)

Subject: Agency Determinations and Findings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as implemented in the Statewide Protocol

Project: Environmental Assessment for Desert Bighorn Sheep Research Project in the Barstow, Needles, and Palm Springs Field Offices of the California Desert District

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Desert District Office (CDD) is working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to better understand Desert Bighorn Sheep (DBS) populations to make informed decisions to ensure the survival of DBS populations. DBS have historically occupied more than 60 mountain ranges in southeastern California. In order to better understand the connectivity between the different mountain ranges, CDFW needs to monitor demography and habitat use at the herd and metapopulation levels. The presence of a pneumonia strain known as Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae has heightened the need to understand cross-herd and cross-wilderness/mountain range connectivity. Monitoring will be performed in three ways: 1) installation and use of game cameras at wildlife water developments; 2) helicopter net-gun capture of DBS in wilderness and non-wilderness lands, airlift to processing sites, and release back at the capture site; and occasionally 3) helicopter net-gun capture of DBS in wilderness and field processing.

DBS monitoring activities are performed with game cameras installed at existing wildlife water developments. Cameras will be installed on existing infrastructure whenever possible. Where existing infrastructure is not present, game cameras will be installed on newly placed t-posts.

DBS monitoring also includes gathers conducted with helicopters in wilderness areas where the DBS are located. Because the locations of DBS cannot be known until the time of capture, no specific gather locations are identified up-front. Captured DBS can be either “field processed” at the capture site, or more commonly transported by helicopter to previously identified processing locations.
sites for data collection. Processing sites were identified by CDFW and BLM as large, previously disturbed areas that could accommodate helicopter landing, a crew of personnel, and all necessary equipment to conduct processing and data collection activities (Attachment 1). After processing, DBS are flown back to their capture locations and released.

The DBS Monitoring Project constitutes an undertaking subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) review to consider effects to historic properties. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the DBS Monitoring Project includes the locations of game camera installations, wilderness gather/release sites, and the processing sites.

Pursuant to the State Protocol Agreement Between The California State Director of The Bureau of Land Management And The California and Nevada State Historic Preservation Officers (2014), and consistent with 36 CFR Part 800, the BLM-CDD cultural resources staff have reviewed this undertaking and make the following recommendations regarding historic properties that may be affected.

This project satisfies the criteria stipulated in Appendix A to the State Protocol Agreement governing Exempt Undertakings and the following exemption applies to this undertaking:

B3: Resource management actions which do not utilize motorized vehicles or create new surface disturbance and that do not have the potential to affect access to or use of resources by American Indians.

This memorandum documents the recommendations of the cultural resources staff, the acceptance of these recommendations by the agency official (as defined in 36 CFR §800.2(a)), and constitutes the formal statement of Agency findings and determinations for Section 106 of the NHPA as implemented in the State Protocol Agreement. BLM has satisfied its responsibilities to take into account the effects of this undertaking on historic properties that may be included or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommended by:

[Signature]
District Archaeologist, California Desert District

Date: 9-24-2018

Acceptance by the Agency Official:

[Signature]
Associate District Manager, California Desert District

Date: 10/03/2018

Attachments (1):
Map of CDFW Processing Sites

Desert Bighorn Sheep Monitoring Project 2018, Barstow, Needles, and Palm Springs Field Offices, California Desert District
Potential Base Camps for Desert Bighorn Captures
BLM California Desert District
Fall 2018

Legend:
- Historic Desert Bighorn Mountain Ranges
- Potential Desert Bighorn Capture Areas Fall 2018
- Wilderness
- Wilderness Study Area
- Bureau of Land Management

Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA