



Forest
Service

Sequoia National Forest and
Giant Sequoia National Monument
Kern River Ranger District

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File Code: 1950/2350
Route To:

Date: AUG 22 2019

Subject: Whiskey Flat Trail Maintenance and Funding

To: Teresa Benson, Forest Supervisor

From: Dionne Uzes, Deputy District Ranger *DU*

I have determined that the Whiskey Flat Trail Maintenance and Funding falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service Handbook (FSH) that may be excluded from environmental documentation. The particular categories are found at FSH 1909.15, Chapter 32.11 (2) Categories Established by the Secretary—activities related to funding [7 CFR 1(b.3)(2)]

and

FSH 1909.15, Chapter 32.12 (4) Categories Established by the Chief – Repair and maintenance of roads, trails and landline boundaries [36 CFR 220.6(d)(4)].

These categories are appropriate because the project involves both funding for volunteer maintenance with Kern and Tulare Counties RAC funds, and and maintenance of the Whiskey Flat Trail. Attached is a checklist completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documenting there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with the project necessitating preparing an environmental analysis or environmental impact statement.

Enclosure



NEPA COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST
internal use only

Sequoia National Forest
Kern River Ranger District

Name of Project: Whiskey Flat Trail Maintenance and Funding

Purpose and Need (Why here and why now):

The goal of this project is to complete maintenance on the existing Whiskey Flat Trail (32E35) so it can continue to be enjoyed by the public.

Proposed Action (who, what, when, where and how):

This existing non-motorized trail extends along the North Fork Kern River from Kernville to Fairview, a distance of 14 miles. Trail maintenance would consist of brushing, clearing down trees, and moving rocks and dirt where needed to stabilize the trail and reduce erosion. Work may be accomplished by volunteers, partners or employees. Funding may available for the project through the Kern and Tulare Counties RAC program.

LEGAL LOCATION and LOCATION DESCRIPTION (Compartment/Watershed, etc.):

T23S-T25S; R31E-R32E, See attached map.

Purpose of Checklist: For projects categorically excluded under NEPA that do not require a decision memo, this checklist documents that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

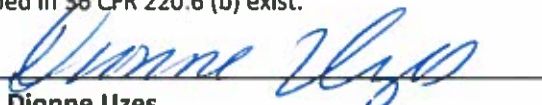
Applicable Categorical Exclusions for Projects Not Requiring a Decision Memo			
For full description of each category and examples refer to FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.			
32.11 Categories Established by the Secretary 7 CFR 1b.3		32.12 Categories Established by the Chief 36 CFR 220.6(d)	
	(1) Policy admin. development/planning		(1) Prohibit for resource protection
X	(2) Activities related to funding/money		(2) Admin procedures, processes, instructions
	(3) Inventories, research activities, studies		(3) Repair/maintain Admin. Sites
	(4) Educational and information activities	X	(4) Repair/maintain roads, trails, landlines
	(5) Law enforcement and investigation		(5) Repair/maintain Rec. Sites/Facilities
	(6) Advisory or consultative activities		(6) Acquisition of land or interest in land.
	(7) Trade representation/market development		(7) Sale or exchange of land with same land use
			(8) Approve/modify/continue less than 1 year Special Use Permit
			(9) New Permit for existing ski area for administrative changes only
			(10) Amend/Replace existing Special Use Permit for administrative changes only
32.3 Categories Established by Statute			
	42 USC 15942- Oil and Gas Leases		
	16 USC 6554(d) – Applied Silvicultural Assessments		
32.4 Statutory NEPA Exception			
	16 USC 6231 – Organization Camp Special Use Authorization		

Determination of Extraordinary Circumstances for the Proposal 36 CFR 220.6(a)				
Resource Conditions 36 CFR 220.6(b)	Resource Condition Present?		For Resource Conditions that are Present, the following Findings are made:	Reference material used to support finding of no extraordinary circumstance
	Yes	No		

(1) Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species		X	No federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	Work within existing trail prism will not impact sensitive wildlife species or habitat. Forest Wildlife Biologist.
(2) Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds;		X	The project is within the Bakersfield Municipal Watershed and near but not in the Kern River. With the use of BMPs, no floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action.	Best Management practices, attached, will be used to assure that no resource damage occurs. District Hydrologist.
(3) Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas;		X	The project adjoins the congressionally designated Wild and Scenic North Fork Kern River. However, the minor and short-term nature of the maintenance project will not affect the character of the area or this designation.	District Recreation Officer.
(4) Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas;		X	This trail is partially within the Chico Roadless Area. However, the minor and short-term nature of the maintenance project will not affect the character of the area or this designation.	Maintenance of an existing non-motorized trail does not affect IRA designation. District Recreation Officer.
(5) Research natural areas;		X	RNAs will not be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	No research natural areas are present. District Planner.
(6) American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites, and		X	Implementation of the Proposed Action would not <u>adversely</u> affect American Indian religious or cultural sites. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	Cultural resource surveys in 2019 have identified and flagged several areas that are to be avoided, and appropriate management practices will be communicated to crews. See attached handout. District Archeologist.
(7) Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.		X	No archeological sites or sites eligible for National Historic Register listing will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	see (6) above.

I have considered the above listed resource conditions and determined there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. None of the extraordinary circumstances described in 36 CFR 220.6 (b) exist.

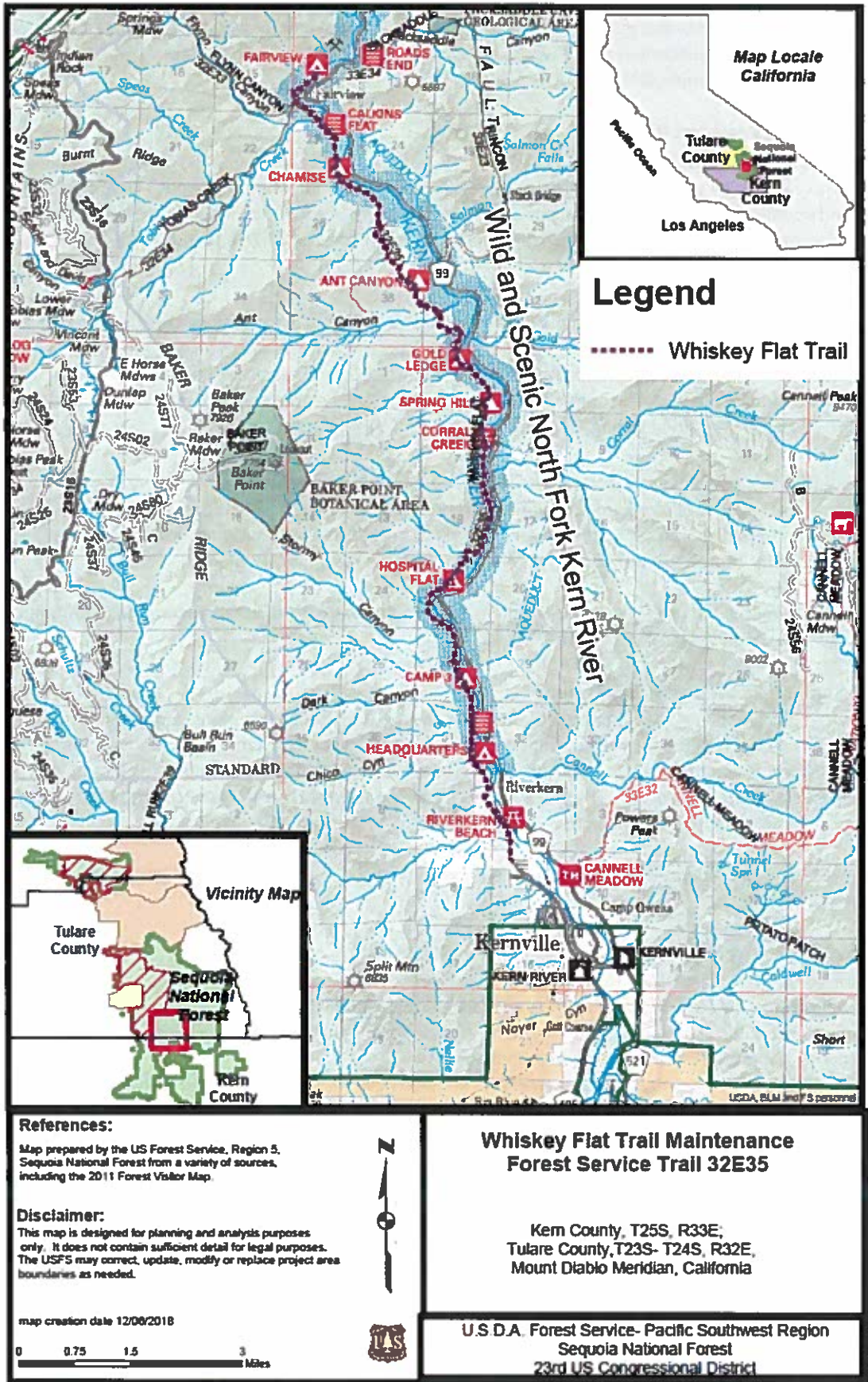
Signature



Dionne Uzès
Deputy District Ranger

Date





Legend
 Whiskey Flat Trail

References:
 Map prepared by the US Forest Service, Region 5, Sequoia National Forest from a variety of sources, including the 2011 Forest Visitor Map.

Disclaimer:
 This map is designed for planning and analysis purposes only. It does not contain sufficient detail for legal purposes. The USFS may correct, update, modify or replace project area boundaries as needed.

map creation date 12/09/2018

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Whiskey Flat Trail Maintenance Forest Service Trail 32E35

Kern County, T25S, R33E;
 Tulare County, T23S- T24S, R32E,
 Mount Diablo Meridian, California

U.S. D.A. Forest Service- Pacific Southwest Region
 Sequoia National Forest
 23rd US Congressional District

Data used in creation of this map is on file with the Sequoia National Forest data Path T:\FSW\32E35\Project\KRD\2300\Navigation\Inventory\FatTrails

Whiskey Flat Trail Maintenance and Funding

There would be no effects to water quality and the designated beneficial uses of water if this project was implemented. All ground disturbances would be minor and would be completed by hand on existing trails. This project would implement and monitor all applicable BMPs listed below.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

2.3 Timing of Construction Activities

This practice is to minimize erosion by conducting operations during minimal runoff periods. Operations should be scheduled and conducted to minimize erosion and sedimentation when ground conditions are such that excessive rutting and soil compaction would not occur. Trails would be maintained when conditions are dry.

2.7 Control of Trail Drainage

The objective of this practice is to minimize the erosive effects of water concentrated by trail drainage features; to disperse runoff from disturbances within the trail clearing limits; to lessen the sediment yield from disturbances within the trailed areas; to minimize erosion of the trail prism by runoff from trail surfaces and uphill areas. Standard trail maintenance practices would be implemented to meet the above objectives. This includes implementing Waterbars on all trails maintained during the implementation of this project.

2.11 Control of Sidecast Material during Construction and Maintenance

The objective of this practice is to minimize sediment production originating from sidecast material during trail maintenance. Maintenance on trails by the project would not create sidecast materials onto the side of the trail. All materials would either be consolidated onto the trail or moved to a stable location.

BMPEP form E11 would be utilized to evaluate implementation on roads constructed, reconstructed or maintained during the existence of this special use permit.

2.12 Servicing and Refueling of Equipment

The objective of this practice is to prevent pollutants such as fuels, lubricants, bitumens and other harmful materials from being discharged into or near rivers, streams and impoundments, or into natural or man-made channels. Service and refueling locations would be located outside of SMZs. Servicing and refueling would take place along trails and would follow forest spill plan direction. This BMP includes the servicing and refueling of chainsaws, if chainsaws are used during implementation of this project.

BMPEP form E12 would be utilized to evaluate implementation on those areas that meet the requirements for servicing and refueling of equipment.

2.13 Control of Maintenance Activities Adjacent to SMZ's

The objective of this practice relative to this project is to protect water quality by controlling maintenance actions within and adjacent to any streamside management zone so that the following SMZ functions are not impaired:
Acting as an effective filter for sediment generated by erosion from bare surfaces, dust drift, and oil traces;
Maintain riparian habitat and channel stabilizing effects;
Keep floodplain surface in a resistant, undisturbed condition to slow water velocities and limit erosion by flood flows.

The following table describes SMZ widths by slope. All trail maintenance would be located on existing trails. There would be no new disturbance within or outside of SMZs.

Stream Class	SMZ Width by % Slope					Stream Order
	<30%	>30%	>40%	>50%	>70%	
Meadows	100	Na	Na	Na	Na	-
Seeps Springs Bogs	100	Na	Na	Na	Na	-
I	100	150	200	250	1.5 times the distance to slope break	4+
II	100	100	150	200		3-4
III	50	100	100	150		2-3
IV	≤50	≤50	75	100		1-2
IV	≤50	≤50	≤50	≤50		1-0

2.22 Maintenance of Trails

The objective of this practice is to maintain trails in a manner which provides for water quality protection by minimizing rutting, failures, side-casting, and blockage of drainage facilities all of which can cause erosion and sedimentation and deteriorating watershed conditions. All trails within this project would be maintained and kept up to all forest service standards and guidelines.