

Paul Hoffman

To: Exemption 6

07/30/2002 08:21 AM

cc:

Subject: Re: Mojave Preserve update

Jim

Good to hear from you.

First, my apologies for the pace of the process. I am still working with the Solicitors in reviewing the Preserve's General Management Plan and National Park Management Policies to determine what we can or cannot do in the way of maintaining at least some of the water developments. The rancher and the NPS will continue to remove the existing structures except those that were slated to remain as cultural/historical artifacts. Whatever we do in the way of maintained structures will require a new storage structure and pump system to be built and maintained by a nonprofit organization under an MOU with the NPS.

The GMP did articulate some restrictions on hunting near developed areas, specifically Kelso Station. It also imposes a ban on "plinking". So far as I know there are no other restrictions being imposed and predators are identified as huntable in the GMP.

Regarding the GPS data for springs and developments, I suspect they referred you to the BLM because they would have kept that data prior to the NPS assuming responsibility for the Preserve. Everybody is going to those internet map servers because it is a whole lot cheaper and more extensive than printing maps, but you are right in that they are big files and cumbersome to deal with. You might check with your local library to see if they have a high speed connection, or maybe the BLM would let you use one of their computers or print the maps you are looking for. The challenge is that to show all the springs, etc. for the whole preserve printed on 8.5 X 11 would use reams of paper.

My understanding is that raven predation actually ranks fairly low as a cause of the desert tortoise population decline. It is also true that a lot of the Preserve is above the altitude at which one typically finds a lot of tortoises. Loss of habitat to development and increased vehicular traffic, the respiratory disease and plain old drought are probably the 3 biggest factors contributing to their decline. Of course, we cannot control the disease or drought, so we focus on development, accidental killings by vehicles and stray bullets, etc. There is also some question about the extent to which desert tortoise populations may naturally swing fairly widely. Research is ongoing, but difficult. As is the case with most population dynamics, the real issue here is the incredibly low birth and survival rates of baby tortoises exacerbated by high mortality.

It was good to hear from you and I'll be back in touch when I know more.

Thanks

Paul Hoffman, DAS/FWP

Room 3156

202-208-4416

Cell Ex. 6

Fax 202-208-4684

E-mail: Paul\_Hoffman@ios.doi.gov

LAN-Mail: Paul Hoffman/ASFW/OS/DOI

ODwriter@aol.com



Exemption 6

To: Paul Hoffman/ASFW/OS/DOI@DOI

Paul Hoffman

08/28/2002 10:03 AM

To: **Exemption 6**

cc: Paul Hoffman/ASFW/OS/DOI@DOI

Subject: Re: Mojave Preserve PEER petition, tortoise document

Jim

I wanted to get back to you about the hunting issues, etc. in the Mojave National Preserve. I have gone back to review the GMP to answer your questions.

I may have mis-spoken regarding coyote and varmint hunting on the Preserve, although the GMP is silent on the issue. When it comes to hunted species on the Preserve, the GMP says:

*In accordance with the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan hunting would be limited to upland game birds (mourning dove, quail, chukar), cottontails, jackrabbits, and big game (deer and bighorn sheep) during their designated CDF&G seasons. Cottontails and jackrabbits may be hunted only from September through January.*

This text clearly allows the hunting of rabbits, but does not address coyotes and by omission may preclude coyote hunting on the Preserve. The GMP also says hunting on the preserve will follow California hunting laws with the exceptions that will be pursued by the NPS as articulated. I would encourage you to go to the GMP on the web and review this section (pages 71-88) for yourself. It is fairly short, just scroll down the PDF to Recreation and then down to Hunting: [http://www.nps.gov/moja/mojafeis3/MOJA\\_GMP71-88.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/moja/mojafeis3/MOJA_GMP71-88.pdf)

The one-mile no shooting zone around the Kelso Station and Kelso Dunes is part of the plan, and while your safety arguments make sense and California law probably would have been sufficient, I am not sure that that small of an area out of the whole preserve is that much of a loss. California law does apply to shooting around other improvements in the Preserve.

Plinking and target shooting is prohibited in the Preserve and this is an effort to reduce Desert Tortoise mortality. One can certainly argue the effectiveness of this regulation, but one can also argue that there are plenty of other places to plink if one so desires.

The PEER Group, et al, petition is just that. It does not necessarily represent new policy, but rather their request of Secretary Norton for a new policy. We have taken their request under advisement.

If you have any other questions, let me know.

Thanks.

Paul Hoffman, DAS/FWP

Room 3156

202-208-4416

Cell **Exemption 6**

Fax 202-208-4684

E-mail: Paul\_Hoffman@ios.doi.gov

LAN-Mail: Paul Hoffman/ASFW/OS/DOI

**Exemption 6**