

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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May 21, 2014

Reply in Reference To: BUR_2014_0421_001

John Swett
Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado River Regional Office
Multi-Species Conservation Program
P.O. Box 61470
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

RE: Mojave Valley Backwater Conservation Area Project: 15 Test Pits.

Dear Mr. Swett:

Thank you for seeking my consultation regarding the above noted undertaking. Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800 (as amended 8-05-04) regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is seeking my comments regarding the delineation of the Area of Potential Effects (APE), adequacy of identification efforts, and a *Finding of No Historic Properties Affected* for the project.

Reclamation is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish a backwater habitat in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. The backwater habitat is proposed to be constructed on the California side of the Colorado River just north of Park Moapi Regional Park and is currently being used for recreational boating, camping and off-road vehicles. The sediments in this area are dredged material from the Colorado River so the quality and type of sediments is unknown. Reclamation proposes to excavate fifteen backhoe trenches to determine the suitability of the location to support a backwater habitat.

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) lies approximately thirteen miles south of Needles, California, between river miles 236 and 237 and includes trenches, access roads and spoils piles. The vertical APE for the fifteen three by four foot trenches will be excavated to a maximum twenty-five feet in depth; however due to the high water table excavation will likely stop at approximately ten feet in depth.

In addition to your letter received April 21, 2014, you have submitted the *Project Setting and Cultural Resources Summary for Mojave Valley Backwater Conservation Area Project; 15 Test Pits*, as evidence of your efforts to identify and evaluate historic properties in the project APE.

Archival research was conducted of Reclamation cultural resource files. No previously recorded archaeological resources were identified within the APE. Pedestrian surface survey was conducted in 2011 during improvements to Park Moabi Regional Park. No cultural resources were identified in the project APE. Native American consultation has been ongoing. On March

28, 2014 project specific consultation included contact with the Native American Heritage Commission and Native American tribes and individuals likely to have knowledge of sites of religious or cultural significance to them in the project area via letters and follow-up calls (March – May 2013). No such properties were identified through consultation efforts.

Pursuant to 36 CFR §800.4(d)(1) Reclamation has determined there will be *No Historic Properties Affected* by the proposed project. Based on your identification efforts, I concur with the *Finding of No Historic Properties Affected*. Identification efforts are sufficient and I also have no objections to the delineation of the APE, as depicted in the supporting documentation.

I look forward to continuing consultation on the Mojave Valley Backwater Conservation Area Project. Be advised that under certain circumstances, such as unanticipated discovery or a change in project description, Reclamation may have additional future responsibilities for this undertaking under 36 CFR Part 800. Thank you for seeking my comments and considering historic properties as part of your project planning. If you have any questions or concerns regarding archaeological resources, please contact Associate State Archaeologist, Kim Tanksley at (916) 445-7035 or by email at kim.tanksley@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Carol Roland-Nawi, PhD
State Historic Preservation Officer