

Death Valley National Park Safety Review of Sporting Events

Purpose and Need:

In October 2013, Death Valley National Park placed a temporary moratorium on issuing special use permits for sporting events within Death Valley to conduct a safety review on large scale cycling and running events held within the park. Permit holders with approved permits at the time the moratorium was issued were allowed to hold their events as scheduled.

The safety assessment of permitted sporting events was initiated by Death Valley National Park Superintendent in response to an increase in permit violations of past events, observations from park staff on safety issues, verbal complaints from visitors, and an increase in requests for new sporting events from previous years. The safety assessment evaluates event risks for park staff, park visitors, sporting event staff, participants, and participant's support crews in an effort to determine if and what actions can be taken to mitigate risks and hazards. The safety assessment included consultation with state and federal partners (Public Health Service, California Department of Transportation, and National Park Service Pacific West Region and Washington offices).

The safety assessment team was charged with the following:

- I. Identify risks and hazards associated with sporting events and provide recommendations to mitigate these risks and hazards;
- II. Identify other circumstances that should be considered in determining if these activities can be conducted in a manner that maintains public health and safety and is protective of park visitors and staff;
- III. Evaluate sporting events with regard to:
 - a. National Park Service employee safety and staffing capacity
 - b. Park visitor safety and visitation experience
 - c. Safety of event participants, support crews, and event coordinators;
 - d. Increase in number of event requests
- IV. Given the design/alignment of park roads, assess if a road can safely accommodate sporting events along with all other public uses;
- V. Determine new requirements and permit conditions for future events and application requirements for event applicants;
- VI. Present assessment team findings and recommendations to the Superintendent and Pacific West Regional Office for implementation of new requirements and permit conditions.