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## PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE Memorandum

L7617 (PWRO-P)

JUL 24 2007

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Lake Mead National Recreation Area

From: Regional Director, Pacific West Region

Subject: Environmental Compliance for Heritage Greenway Trails

The *Finding of No Significant Impact* (FONSI; received on July 20) for this partnership trails project is approved.

The future benefits for visitors to the area due to this collaborative planning effort, involving Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance staff and other local and regional agencies, is noteworthy.

*Jonathan B. Jarvis*

Jonathan B. Jarvis

*JBJ*  
Attachment

cc:

RTCA-Rice

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT****ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT LAUGHLIN REGIONAL PARK AND REGIONAL HERITAGE GREENWAY TRAILS- NORTH REACH**

July 2007

**Lake Mead National Recreation Area  
Nevada/Arizona****INTRODUCTION**

The National Park Service (NPS) was a cooperating agency in the preparation of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Laughlin Regional Park and Regional Heritage Greenway Trails- North Reach, which evaluated the environmental impacts of a proposal by Clark County to develop recreational opportunities and resource management options for federal lands near Laughlin, Nevada. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) was the lead agency, since the majority of the project will occur on lands under its management. However, both NPS and the Bureau of Land Management served as cooperators since portions of the project occur on lands managed by those agencies. In addition, the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program provided facilitators to assist with project development. The EA was the result of nearly seven years of coordination between federal, state, and local partners. The EA analyzed the no action alternative and four action alternatives. This decision document approves only NPS activities occurring on Lake Mead National Recreation Area lands. Other agencies will prepare separate decision documents covering activities on lands under their respective jurisdictions.

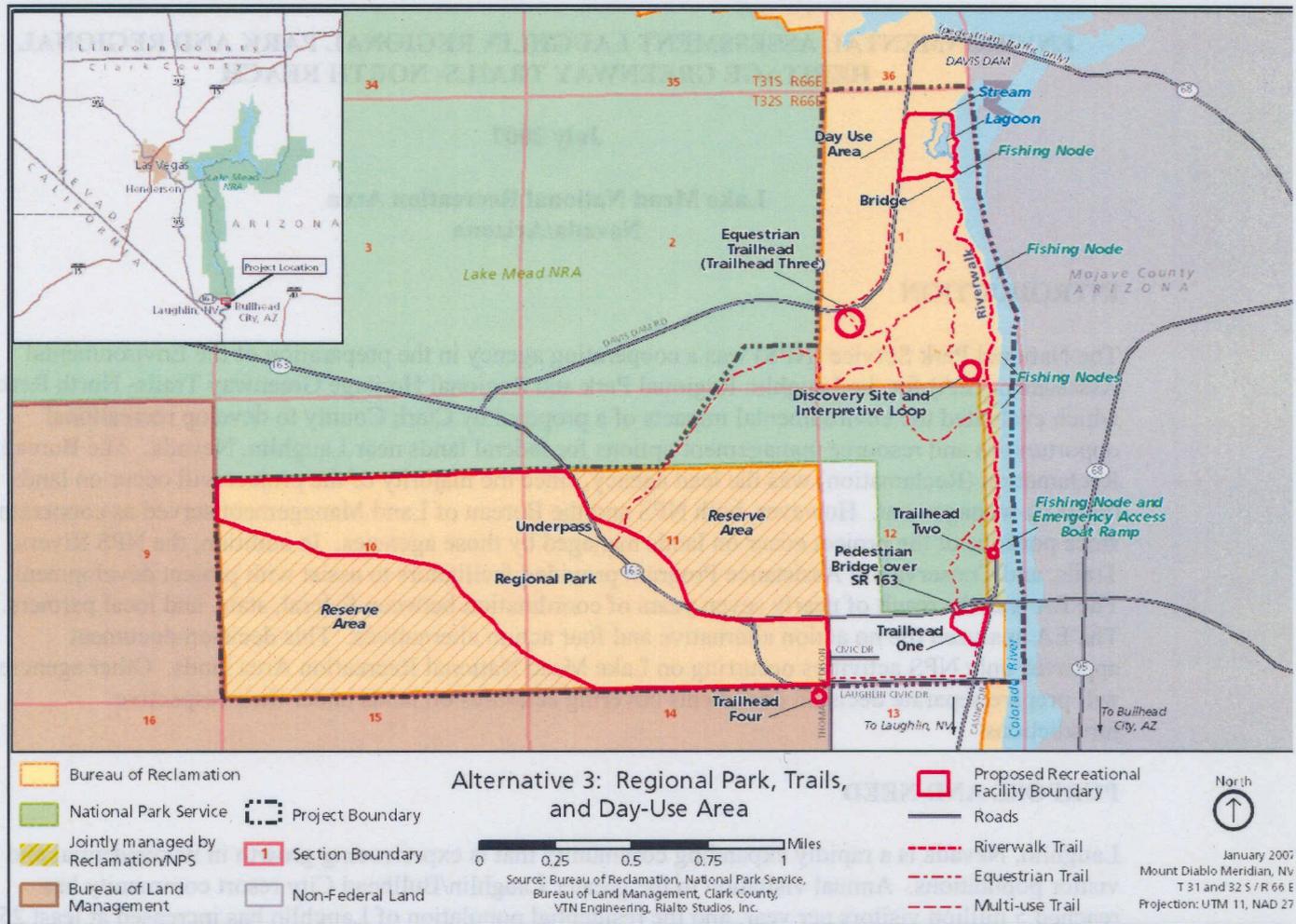
**PURPOSE AND NEED**

Laughlin, Nevada is a rapidly expanding community that is experiencing growth in its residential and visitor populations. Annual visitation to the greater Laughlin/Bullhead City resort community has reached 5 million visitors per year, and the residential population of Laughlin has increased at least 25 percent since 2000. Several sections of federal land border Laughlin, but the majority of this land is not easily accessible to the public.

The purpose of this project is to diversify public recreation opportunities and protect natural and cultural resources on federal, state, and county lands in the vicinity of Laughlin, Nevada. The project is needed to improve public enjoyment of the recreational lands adjacent to the Colorado River, protect the cultural and natural resource values of these lands, and meet the recreational needs of the growing numbers of visitors and residents in the area.

**SELECTED ACTION**

The selected action is Alternative 3, which was identified and analyzed as the preferred alternative in the EA. This course of action is the same as that presented in the EA. The selected action includes the actions described in Alternative 1, which are elements common to all action alternatives; and, also includes the construction of the Laughlin Regional Park, a combination of civic facilities and commercial recreational activities. All elements of the selected action are presented below, and are not limited to those actions on NPS lands only. Elements occurring on NPS lands are Trailhead No. 2, portions of the multi-use trails and the equestrian trails, the Riverwalk, the Discovery Site, and some fishing nodes. Elements of the selected action occurring outside the park include the day-use area, the golf course, and the civic facilities. NPS elements are shown on the map that follows.



**Elements Common to All Action Alternatives (As Described in Alternative 1)**

These actions comprise a system of pedestrian and equestrian trails, trailheads, a Riverwalk, and a Day-Use Area in the location described as the North Reach. All proposed day-use facilities and associated amenities will be located on lands managed by Reclamation and NPS, with three exceptions: (1) Trailhead 4 will be located on land managed by the BLM; (2) Trailhead 1 will be located on land managed by Clark County; and (3) portions of a multi-use trail will be located on lands managed by Clark County and the State of Nevada. All elements proposed under this alternative are described by facility type.

**Trailheads**

**Trailhead 1**– This trailhead will be located at the southwest corner of the State Route 163 and Casino Drive intersection on Clark County land. Trailhead 1 will replace an existing overflow parking area. The trailhead will cover approximately 3.7 acres and would accommodate 50 parking spaces for recreational vehicles, buses, and general purpose vehicles on a paved surface. Unpaved portions of the trailhead will be replanted with native vegetation. Vehicles will access the trailhead from Casino Drive or Laughlin Civic Drive. Facilities at Trailhead 1 will include picnic shelters, restrooms, bike racks, lighting, and signs. An orientation kiosk with trail maps, information on local recreational opportunities, and emergency contact numbers, will also be located here. Facilities at Trailhead 1 will be American with Disabilities (ADA) accessible. Additionally, this trailhead will be designed to accommodate future access to the proposed Laughlin Civic Complex.

*Trailhead 2*— This new trailhead will be located approximately 1,000 feet north of Trailhead 1 in a previously disturbed area, and will serve as a departure point for the majority of trails proposed for the North Reach. Trailhead 2 will cover approximately one acre and will be designed to accommodate 26 spaces for passenger vehicle parking and a volunteer host site. Unpaved surfaces in and around the trailhead will be revegetated with native plants. Vehicles will access this trailhead from Casino Drive, off of State Route 163. North of Trailhead 2, the existing road will be removed and replaced with a new Riverwalk (see Riverwalk Trail, below). Pedestrians and bicycles may also reach Trailhead 2 from Trailhead 1, via multi-use trails and a proposed pedestrian bridge across State Route 163 (see Transportation, below). This trailhead will be ADA-accessible. Amenities at Trailhead 2 will include potable water, restrooms, benches, lighting, and signs. An orientation kiosk with trail maps, information on local recreational opportunities, and emergency contact numbers, will also be located here.

*Trailhead 3*— This facility will be an equestrian trailhead on Davis Dam Road, approximately 3.7 acres in size, in a previously disturbed area. The equestrian trailhead will accommodate 30-40 parking spaces for passenger, recreational vehicle, and horse trailer parking. Unpaved portions of the trailhead will be replanted with native vegetation. Amenities at the equestrian trailhead will include equestrian shade structures (corrals), water troughs, hitching posts, restrooms, picnic tables, and signs. This trailhead will be ADA accessible.

*Trailhead 4*— This trailhead will be located south of the intersection at Thomas Edison and Laughlin Civic Drive on federal land administered by the BLM. This trailhead will be approximately one acre in size, and will accommodate parking for 50 general purpose vehicles on an unimproved surface. Amenities will include signage, benches, and a shade shelter. Portions of the trailhead will be replanted with native vegetation. This trailhead will be ADA-accessible. In addition, entry monuments and interpretive signage will be located adjacent to Trailhead 4. Gateways and monuments will be large enough to attract motorists and will be designed to identify the entry as well as highlight this area as a place of significance and special character. The design theme will reflect Laughlin's natural history and setting.

### Trails

*Multi-Use Trails*— These trails will form the connection between Trailheads 1, 2, and 4. The trails will be a maximum of 25 feet in width and a total of approximately 1.2 miles long. Approximately 0.7 miles of the multi-use trail will be constructed on non-federal land administered by Clark County and Nevada Department of Wildlife. While the precise alignment of these trails will be determined during the site design phase, it will be designed to connect trailheads with a proposed pedestrian bridge over State Route 163 (see Transportation, below). The multi-use trails will also serve as the connection between the proposed trail system and the existing river walk along the Colorado River in Laughlin. The trail will accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, and provide for ADA access. Landscape modifications, signs, lighting, and other improvements will be included as appropriate.

*Equestrian Trail*— Approximately 2.3 miles of equestrian trails will be constructed between Trailhead 3 and the proposed Discovery Site and between Trailhead 3 and the proposed Day-Use Area (see Day-Use Facilities, below). These trails will be a maximum of 25 feet wide, and will follow the alignment of an existing trail or road. The equestrian trails will join the Riverwalk at the Day-Use Area and at the Discovery Site, forming a complete loop. All proposed equestrian trails will provide for ADA access, where feasible.

*Riverwalk*— The proposed Riverwalk will follow the approximate alignment of the existing roadway as it parallels the river from State Route 163, from Trailhead 2 to the proposed Day-Use Area, a distance of approximately 1.4 miles. The existing pavement will be removed, leaving only the portion of road that

will provide vehicle access to Trailhead 2 from State Route 163. The Riverwalk will be a maximum of 25 feet wide, with three distinct sections:

- State Route 163 to Trailhead 2. This portion of the Riverwalk will be routed from the vicinity of a proposed pedestrian bridge across State Route 163 to Trailhead 2, located approximately 1,000 feet north of State Route 163. The trail will be designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and ADA access. Vehicle access will be available from an existing access point on State Route 163 at Casino Drive. Lighting will be installed, and areas adjacent to this portion of the trail will be revegetated.
- Trailhead 2 to Discovery Site. This portion of the Riverwalk from Trailhead 2 to the Discovery Site will be designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and ADA access. A small portion of the trail south of the Discovery Site will be shared with the equestrian users. Lighting will be installed and areas adjacent to the trail will be revegetated.
- Discovery Site to Day-Use Area. From the Discovery Site, the Riverwalk will continue northward to the proposed Day-Use Area. This portion of the trail will be designed to accommodate pedestrians, equestrian use, bicycles, and ADA access. Lighting will be installed, and areas adjacent to this portion of the trail will be revegetated.

As part of the Riverwalk construction, this alternative also proposes to restore wetlands between the Riverwalk and the Colorado River. Currently, this area contains a narrow (approximately 20 ft) band of native and exotic riparian vegetation. This area between the banks of the river to the proposed Riverwalk will be excavated in order to expand and revegetate the riparian area with native plants. The excavation of the Riverwalk and redevelopment of adjacent riparian vegetation is expected to involve 120,000 cubic yards of material, all of which will be reused at the same location.

*Multi-Use Trail Across the Top of Davis Dam-* The trail will start in the Day-Use Area and run on the existing road over the top of Davis Dam to the dirt parking lot on the opposite side of the Dam along the lake shoreline. The trail will use the existing roadway across the top of Davis Dam that is currently being used by hikers and fisherman on a daily basis. The project will consist of installing two gates for people to pass through that can be closed if the Dam is in a high security alert status, and installation of signs.

*Contractor's Camp Interpretive Loop-* This 0.5 mile interpretive walk will be located adjacent to the Discovery Site (see below) at the approximate location of the historic Davis Dam contractor's camp. The precise alignment of this trail will be determined after detailed cultural investigation is completed; in general, it will be designed to lead visitors through the contractor's camp along existing paths or roadways. Several interpretative signs will be posted along the loop with information about the history of Davis Dam and how the contractor's camp area was used.

#### Day-Use Facilities

*Discovery Site-* The Discovery Site will be the focal point for cultural and historical interpretation for this project. This interpretive center will be located approximately 0.75 miles north of Trailhead 2, and will cover approximately two acres of previously disturbed land at the historic Davis Dam contractor's camp. Visitors will access the Discovery Site from the Riverwalk or via the equestrian trail from Trailhead 3. Although specific Discovery Site amenities are not described in this EA, the trails that are part of this project will be designed to accommodate future development of the location as an interpretive facility. Amenities that will be considered as part of this project include trail signs, shade structures, benches, potable water, and lighting. Unpaved surfaces at the Discovery Site will be revegetated with native plants.

*Day-Use Area*- The Day-Use Area will cover approximately 23 acres of a former campground known as 'Sportsman's Park' south of Davis Dam. This facility will be redeveloped to accommodate 200 parking spaces for recreational and passenger vehicles as well as several small recreational structures, including a child's play area, an open play area, shade structures, a concession building, restrooms, signs and lighting. Existing vehicle access to the proposed Day-Use Area will be reconfigured so that vehicle traffic will not access the Riverwalk Trail or Davis Dam.

*Excavated Water Body (Lagoon)* – This water feature, located within the Day-Use Area, will have a surface area of approximately 2.7 acres. It will be designed as a recreational facility and an educational tool, where visitors can wade into the shallow water and actively experience the riparian environment at a safe distance from the mainstream of the Colorado River. Approximately 13,100 cubic yards of material will be excavated to construct this feature. The excavated material will be re-used onsite as fill material. The lagoon will be lined with an impervious layer to prevent water loss through percolation. The final depth of the water will vary, but it is expected to be an average of three feet deep. The shores of this water feature will be revegetated with native wetland and riparian species. The water body will be isolated from the Colorado River. Water levels will be maintained by pumping 8 to 12 acre-feet of water per year from the river through a combination of natural flow and enhanced diversions.

*Stream* - The stream will be an additional excavated water feature in the Day-Use Area, west of the lagoon that will measure approximately 1165 feet long with an average width of three feet. Like the lagoon, the stream will be designed to encourage visitors to interact with running water at a distance from the mainstream of the Colorado River. The water for this feature will be maintained by pumping to a higher elevation at the north end of the stream, allowing the water to flow downstream through a series of manmade and natural streambed formations. The water for this feature will be pumped from the river at the rate of approximately 0.08 acre feet per year. The stream will be lined with an impervious layer to prevent water loss through percolation. The water in the stream will be recirculated in a closed system for conservation and efficiency.

*Fishing Nodes*– Several fishing docks or piers will be constructed along the Colorado River at three locations: (1) at the eastern end of the Day-Use Area; (2) between the Day-Use Area and the Discovery Site; and, (3) at a river access point adjacent to Trailhead 2. The precise location of the fishing nodes will be determined during final site design, pending U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) permitting and detailed cultural resource investigations in the project area. Three styles of fishing nodes are being evaluated for use, including: (1) a cantilevered dock; (2) a traditional pier; and (3) a floating dock. The specific type of dock or pier selected will be determined by the Corps and other agencies during the permitting process for this project, as the Corps has specific jurisdiction over the waters of the United States (in this case, the Colorado River) and the adjacent riparian habitat. The cantilevered dock could be constructed in adjacent uplands and extend over the water, although the distance from the dock to the water may be greater during periods of low river levels. The traditional pier will involve support pilings in the main stem of the Colorado River and, again, the distance from the pier to the water may be greater during periods of low river levels. The floating dock will have pilings similar to the traditional dock, but the fishing platform will rise and fall with river levels.

#### Transportation

*Pedestrian Bridge Overpass on SR163*- A pedestrian and bicycle bridge will be constructed across State Route 163 west of Casino Drive to facilitate access between Trailheads 1 and 4 to the proposed recreational facilities north of the highway. This crossing will include foundation and bridge structures, landing areas on both sides of the highway, structure aesthetics (including trail identification), ramps, revegetation areas, and ADA accessibility.

Multi-Use Bridge at Day-Use Area– A bridge suitable for pedestrians, bicycles, and equestrians will be constructed to connect the Day-Use Area to the Riverwalk Trail over an existing wash.

Emergency Access Boat Dock– An emergency access boat dock will be constructed on the riverbank near Trailhead 2. The dock will be gated and reserved for official use only.

Vehicle Access– Existing transportation routes and access points will be modified to enhance safety for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic, and to provide sufficient signage to direct traffic to each of the proposed facilities. Specific vehicle traffic improvements will include the following:

- The existing road north of Trailhead 2 will be removed and the Riverwalk constructed, eliminating vehicle access north of Trailhead 2.
- Directional signs will be installed at the intersection of State Route 163 and the Davis Dam Access Road. The signs will be designed to provide identification of the Laughlin Regional Heritage Greenway Trail System, the Day-Use Area, the equestrian trails, and the Riverwalk facilities.
- Entry signs and monuments, with directional signs, will be constructed at the intersection of Thomas Edison and Laughlin Civic Drive (adjacent to Trailhead 4).
- Existing vehicle access to the proposed Day-Use Area will be reconfigured so that vehicle traffic could not access the Riverwalk or Davis Dam.

#### Utilities

The Riverwalk, pedestrian bridge over State Route 163, and connecting trails will serve as a utility corridor in this alternative, with a 6-inch conduit for electrical power, a 4-inch conduit for fiber optics, a 2-inch conduit for telephone, and up to a 12-inch conduit for waterlines. These will be underground conduits except where they will be embedded within the bridge structure. Electrical power will be supplied by the Nevada Power Company from an existing substation at State Route 163 and Casino Drive. Potable water will be supplied via an existing Big Bend Water District 24-inch waterline at the corner of Deputy Way and the Laughlin Civic Center. An estimated 159,000 gallons of potable water will be needed per year for this alternative. Sanitary sewer lines located north of State Route 163 will be collected in a tank and transported to the local Clark County Water Reclamation Plant. Sanitary sewer lines south of State Route 163 will be gravity flow into the Big Bend Water District collection system. Solid waste services will be provided by Republic Services; the landfill for this project area is located near Needles Highway and State Route 163.

#### **Additional Actions Specific to the Selected Action**

In addition to the elements common to all action alternatives, this alternative includes the construction of the Laughlin Regional Park, a combination of civic facilities and commercial recreational activity on approximately 400 acres managed by Reclamation. The elements of this alternative include the following.

#### Golf Course

An Audubon International Signature golf course is proposed for approximately 270 acres within the Regional Park. The golf course will be a desert style course with at least 135 acres maintained as enhanced open space. The course will be part of a cooperative effort between Reclamation, the United States Golf Association, and Audubon International under a program that promotes ecologically sound land management and the conservation of natural resources. The course will be designed, constructed, and maintained according to standards set forth in the Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the

United States as well as Audubon International's Signature Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf. This course will be the one of the few in Nevada to earn the National Audubon Signature designation. To earn this designation, Audubon International requires the following program, which begins during the design phase and continues through construction and long-term management of the course:

- An initial site assessment conducted by Audubon International staff;
- The development and implementation of a Natural Resource Management Plan that serves as a construction and operations manual for the property;
- Site visits during major phases of the project;
- Training and education for construction and operational personnel;
- An on-site Environmental Audit to assess compliance with program and site-specific requirements; and,
- Long-term management in accordance with Audubon Signature standards.

#### Trails

An approximately 1.5 mile long pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trail will connect the Regional Park in to the North Reach trail system. The trail will follow the alignment of an existing road, and will be a maximum of 25 feet in width. The precise trail alignment will be determined during site design, but generally the trail will go north from the Regional Park and through a portion of Lake Mead NRA to connect with the trail system in the North Reach. In addition, a multi-use trail loop around the golf course development will be constructed within the 400 acres designated for the Regional Park. The trail will be a maximum of 25 feet wide and will be designed for pedestrians, bicycles and equestrians. Both of the proposed trails will provide for ADA access.

#### Civic Facilities

A Clark County multi-generational community center and visitor's center will be located within lands designated for the Regional Park. The center will be linked to the Regional Heritage Greenway Trails in the North Reach by a system of multi-use trails (see above). In addition to serving as a regional visitor's center, this facility may include amenities such as: a commercial kitchen (for senior meal preparation) as well as a teaching kitchen, multi-purpose rooms and facilities (for uses such as fitness, education and games— including Youth First Tee facilities and accommodations), accommodations for emergency services training, and community services offices. The community facilities will include fencing, shade, directional and interpretive signage, utilities, parking, lighting, benches, and landscaping with native plants.

#### Reserve Area

Approximately 550 acres of Reclamation land outside of the Regional Park will be reserved as a natural area. The reserve area will be fenced to prohibit off-road vehicle access and allow vegetation and wildlife to recover from previous disturbance.

#### Transportation

In addition to the Transportation actions mentioned above in 'Elements Common to All Action Alternatives', an underpass will be constructed on State Route 163 to facilitate access on the trail between the Regional Park and the North Reach.

### Utilities

In addition to the Transportation actions mentioned above in 'Elements Common to All Action Alternatives', a 12-inch waterline will follow the alignment of the proposed trail connection between the Regional Park and the North Reach trail system. The Regional Park is expected to use 1.2 million gallons of water per day. The water for the golf course will be reclaimed wastewater from the Big Bend Water District.

### General Construction Schedule

Final site design in the project area will begin in winter 2007. Onsite construction of the project will commence by December 31, 2007.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The EA evaluated five alternatives in detail for addressing the purpose and need for action: The No Action Alternative; Alternative 1 (Trails and Day-Use Area); Alternative 2 (Trails, Day-Use Area, and Water Trail); Alternative 3 (the preferred alternative and selected action described above- Regional Park, Trails, and Day-Use Area); and, Alternative 4 (Regional park, Trails, Day-Use Area, and Water Trail).

Under the No Action Alternative, recreational opportunities would not be authorized or constructed and federal land in the project area would remain difficult for pedestrians and other recreational enthusiasts to access from Laughlin. Alternative 1 consists of the elements described above in 'Elements Common to All Action Alternatives'. Alternative 2 includes the elements described above in 'Elements Common to All Action Alternatives', plus the addition of a recreational "water trail" along the west bank of the Colorado River. Alternative 4 includes the elements described in all three action alternatives.

### **Alternatives Considered but Dismissed**

Reclamation and cooperating agencies considered a range of actions when developing possible alternatives for the proposed project. The following actions were considered and analyzed, but ultimately dismissed because they did not fully satisfy the objectives of this planning effort. Some of these alternatives were associated with security concerns, others were economically infeasible, and others conflicted with environmental concerns.

### Recreational Vehicle Overnight Camping Facility- North Reach

This alternative included a facility in the North Reach, west of Davis Dam, with 125 to 150 campsites with shade shelters, picnic tables, electricity, gravel pull-throughs, roads and pads; lighting, fencing, landscaping to provide screening, shade, and site separation. A service building with toilets, laundry, convenience store, and recreation room was envisioned. The estimated capital and annual operations costs were \$1.3 million and \$381,000, respectively. It was determined that the project would be economically feasible; however, following a series of community and Town Board meetings it was given lower priority than other recreational options. In addition, the NPS opposed development on the west side of Davis Dam Road. Funding sources for this alternative were uncertain or unknown.

### Boat Storage and Launching Facility

This alternative included both indoor and outdoor storage south of Davis Dam. To accommodate this use, a 160-foot-long by 150-foot-wide by 14-foot-high metal structure would be constructed on a 2-foot high cinder block stud wall. In addition, a small access road was required. Associated facilities included a small office and electric power, sewage connections, a water source for boat washing and fire suppression sprinklers, and communications. The estimated capital cost of the facility was \$500,000. This alternative was eliminated because it did not satisfy NPS objectives and would be economically infeasible at this time. The NPS opposed development on the west side of the roadway (old State Route

77) and specifically opposed the development of a launching facility on Lake Mohave within the Davis Dam Security Zone because recreational use in this area already exceeds the management-identified carrying capacity. In addition, Davis Dam is now closed to public traffic for the safety and security of the dam, making public access more difficult and therefore, less likely.

#### Marinas

The proposed marina alternative included construction of a Lake Mohave dock system, a multilane boat launch ramp, boat trailer spaces, vehicle parking spaces, ADA accessibility, and restrooms. Congestion at the nearest boat launch facility at Katherine's Landing, particularly on weekends, was the impetus for this alternative. The NPS Lake Management Plan for Lake Mead and Lake Mohave show that boater use in this area already exceeds recommended boater density. This alternative was eliminated because it would negatively affect the visitor experience by increasing congestion.

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that will promote NEPA, as expressed in Section 101 of NEPA. This alternative will satisfy the following requirements:

- **Requirement 1.** Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- **Requirement 2.** Assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- **Requirement 3.** Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable or unintended consequences;
- **Requirement 4.** Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
- **Requirement 5.** Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and,
- **Requirement 6.** Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

The Council on Environmental Quality states that the environmentally preferable alternative is "the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources (46 FR 18026 – 46 FR 18038)." According to NPS NEPA Handbook (DO-12), through identification of the environmentally preferred alternative, the NPS decision-makers and the public are clearly faced with the relative merits of choices and must clearly state through the decision-making process the values and policies used in reaching final decisions.

Upon full consideration of NEPA Section 101 requirements, Alternative 3 represents the environmentally preferable alternative for the Laughlin Regional Park and Regional Heritage Greenway Trails-North Reach. Alternative 3 was superior to the No Action Alternative and other action alternatives based on fulfillment of the NEPA requirements, by:

- Creating a variety of accessible public recreation opportunities, facilities, and services on federal land (Requirements 2, 3, and 5).
- Providing interpretive opportunities on the natural history of the Colorado River, natural and cultural resources, and the importance of Davis Dam (Requirement 4 and 5).
- Protecting historic and prehistoric resources in the North Reach area (Requirement 4).
- Improving riparian areas and enhancing native vegetation throughout the project area (Requirement 1, 3, 4, and 6).
- Increasing the active management of the entire project area, allowing for a mixture of appropriate use and resource protection (Requirements 1, 3, and 5).

In conclusion, Alternative 3 would provide a broad spectrum of appropriate public recreation opportunities, while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources.

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**MEASURES TO MINIMIZE OR AVOID ENVIRONMENTAL HARM**

Throughout the planning process, mitigation measures were identified and have been incorporated into the selected action (alternative 3- preferred alternative) to reduce impacts below a significant level. All mitigation measures which are incorporated in the selected alternative are summarized in the matrix below. Some project elements, while being outside of the park, have potential to impinge upon the park, and Reclamation acknowledges the need to protect the park and has taken the responsibility to implement those particular measures to minimize environmental harm. Other broad safeguards address generalized project-wide effects, and it was determined that Reclamation or the contractor would take responsibility for those. NPS will monitor to ensure adequate mitigation is in place to minimize project effects on park lands.

**Mitigation Matrix**

Impact	Mitigation	Responsible Party
<b>General Considerations</b>	Ensure the project remains confined within the parameters established in the compliance documents and that mitigation measures will be properly implemented.	Reclamation
	Construction zones will be identified and flagged before beginning the construction work and all disturbances will be confined to the flagged areas. All project personnel will be instructed that their activities must be confined to locations within flagged areas and all equipment and materials must remain within these areas. Disturbance beyond the actual construction zone will be prohibited. This does not exclude necessary temporary structures such as erosion-control fencing.	Construction Contractor
	All tools, equipment, barricades, signs, surplus materials, and rubbish would be removed from the project work limits upon project completion. Any asphalt or concrete surfaces damaged due to work on the project would be repaired to original condition. All demolition debris would be removed from the project site, including all visible concrete and metal pieces. All debris will be placed within an existing landfill approved by Reclamation. (BMPs) to reduce spills would be utilized during refueling and other activities that may release petroleum products into the environment.	Construction Contractor
	A hazardous spill plan would be in place, stating what actions would be taken in the case of a spill and preventive measures to be implemented such as the placement of refueling facilities, storage, and handling of hazardous materials, etc.	Construction Contractor
	All fuel, transmission, or brake fluid leaks, or other hazardous waste leaks, spills, or releases would be reported immediately to the designated Environmental Manager. The Environmental Manager would be responsible for spill material removal and disposal to an approved offsite landfill and, if necessary, would notify Mr. Jeff Smith with the Bureau of Reclamation at 702-293-8060, or Ms. Nancy Rolfe at 702-293-8382.	Construction Contractor
	All equipment on the project would be maintained in a clean and well-functioning state to avoid or minimize contamination from automotive fluids; all equipment would be checked daily.	Construction Contractor
	Staging for construction vehicles and equipment would be located in previously disturbed area, outside of high visitor use areas, would be clearly identified in advance, and would be approved by Reclamation.	Construction Contractor
<b>Soils</b>	Impacts and potential compaction and erosion of bare soils will be minimized in all disturbed areas by salvaging the top four inches of topsoil before construction begins, storing that topsoil in a designated area with	Construction Contractor

	<p>construction fence around it, then placing the salvaged topsoil on restoration areas. After topsoil is replaced, it will be given a fine spray of water to help settle the soil and uncover rock in the soil, and bring up the soil fines to create a crust to help prevent wind and water erosion. The salvaged material may be windrowed as well to assist with erosion prevention. Only soils known to be free of weeds and invasive species will be used during restoration.</p> <p>No vehicle or equipment tracks will be allowed to remain after construction is complete. At a minimum, all disturbed areas will be raked out prior to water sprinkling to reduce the appearance of vehicle tracks and discourage future re-disturbance.</p>	Construction Contractor
<b>Water Quality</b>	<p>BMPs for drainage and sediment control would be implemented to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution and minimize soil loss and sedimentation in drainage areas. Use of BMPs in the project area for drainage area protection would include all or some of the following actions, depending on site-specific requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep disturbed areas as small as practical to minimize exposed soil and the potential for erosion.</li> <li>• Locate waste and excess excavated materials outside drainages to avoid sedimentation.</li> <li>• Install silt fences, temporary earthen berms, temporary water bars, sediment traps, stone check dams, or other equivalent measures (including installing erosion-control measures around the perimeter of stockpiled fill material) as necessary, prior to construction.</li> <li>• Conduct regular site inspections during the construction period to ensure that erosion-control measures were properly installed and are functioning effectively.</li> <li>• Store, use, and dispose chemicals, fuels, and other toxic materials in an appropriate manner.</li> <li>• Re-vegetate disturbed areas as soon as possible after construction is completed.</li> </ul>	Construction Contractor
<b>Flooding</b>	<p>Construct stormwater control facilities.</p>	Clark County
<b>Filling Jurisdictional Waters; Wetlands</b>	<p>Comply with all mitigation measures included in the Corps permit.</p> <p>Revegetation of all disturbed sites will use native plants.</p> <p>BMP's to prevent or reduce non-point source pollution and minimize soil loss and sedimentation into wetlands associated with the proposed lagoon and other shoreline features will include all or some of the actions mentioned in the Water Quality mitigation section, depending on site-specific requirements.</p>	Construction Contractor Corps Construction Contractor
<b>Desert Tortoise (<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>)</b>	<p>NPS, Reclamation, and BLM shall ensure that an authorized desert tortoise biologist is on-site during construction activities, with exception of work activities in the proposed day-use area, river walk trail, and any other areas in Sections 1 and 12 that do not have desert tortoise habitat, for the duration of the project. In accordance with Procedures for Endangered Species Act Compliance for the Mojave Desert Tortoise (Service 1992), an authorized desert tortoise biologist should possess a bachelor's degree in biology, ecology, wildlife biology, herpetology, or</p>	NPS, Reclamation, BLM, Clark County

	<p>closely related fields as determined by the USFWS. The biologist must have demonstrated prior field experience using accepted resource agency techniques to survey for desert tortoises and tortoise sign, which should include a minimum of 60 days field experience. All tortoise biologists shall comply with the USFWS approved handling protocol (DTC 1994, revised 1999). In addition, the biologist shall have the ability to recognize and accurately record survey results and must be familiar with the terms and conditions of the biological opinion. Potential biologists and monitors shall submit a resume to Reclamation for review and approval.</p>	
	<p>A desert tortoise education program shall be presented to all personnel onsite during construction of the proposed project. The program will include information on the biology and distribution of the desert tortoise, its legal status and occurrence in the proposed project area, the definition of "take" and associated penalties, the measures designed to minimize the effects of construction activities, methods employees can use to implement the measures, and reporting procedures to be used when desert tortoises are encountered. The program shall instruct participants to report all observations of listed species and their sign during construction activities to the authorized biologist. Personnel also will be instructed to check under vehicles before moving them as tortoises often seek shelter under parked vehicles.</p>	
	<p>All areas to be disturbed shall have boundaries flagged before beginning the activity and all disturbances shall be confined to the flagged areas. All project personnel will be instructed that their activities must be confined to locations within flagged areas. Disturbance beyond the actual construction zone will be prohibited.</p>	
	<p>The project area, with the exception of the proposed day-use area, river walk trail, and any other areas that do not have desert tortoise habitat, shall be surveyed by an authorized biologist for desert tortoises and their burrows immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the onset of construction. The surveys will provide 100 percent coverage of the project construction area. All potential tortoise burrows will be identified and flagged for avoidance or excavation. All desert tortoise surveys, handling of desert tortoises, and burrow excavation will be performed only by an authorized biologist.</p>	
	<p>Special precautions shall be taken to ensure that desert tortoises are not harmed as a result of their capture and movement during extreme temperatures (i.e. air temperatures below 55 F or above 95 F). Under such adverse conditions, tortoises captured will be monitored continually by an authorized biologist until the tortoise exhibits normal behavior. If a desert tortoise shows signs of heat stress, procedures will be implemented as identified in USFWS approved protocols (Desert Tortoise Council 1994, revised 1999).</p>	
	<p>All burrows located within areas proposed for disturbance, whether occupied or vacant, shall be excavated by a qualified biologist and collapsed or blocked to prevent desert tortoise re-entry. All burrows will be excavated with hand tools to allow removal of desert tortoises or desert tortoise eggs. All desert tortoise handling and excavations, including nests will be conducted by a qualified desert tortoise biologist in accordance with USFWS approved protocol (Desert Tortoise Council 1994, revised 1999).</p>	
	<p>The onsite biologist shall record each observed or handled desert tortoise. Information will include the following: Location, date and time of observation, whether the tortoise was handled, general health and whether it voided its bladder, location tortoise was moved from and location moved to, and unique physical characteristics of each tortoise.</p>	
	<p>Project activities that may endanger a tortoise shall cease if a tortoise is found on a project site. Project activities will resume after the qualified biologist removes the tortoise from danger or after the tortoise has moved to a safe area.</p>	
	<p>A speed limit of 25 miles per hour shall be maintained while on the construction site, access roads, and storage areas. This effort will reduce dust and allow a safe speed at which personnel can observe desert tortoises in the road.</p>	

	<p>Any pipe, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter greater than 3 inches that are stored on the construction site (within desert tortoise habitat), for one or more nights, shall be inspected for tortoises before the material is moved, buried or capped. As an alternative, all such structures may be capped before being stored on the construction site.</p> <p>During the period of highest tortoise activity (approximately March 1 through October 31), all trenches and other excavations with side slopes steeper than a 1 ft rise to 3 ft length, shall be immediately backfilled prior to being left unattended, or: (1) fenced with tortoise proof fencing, (2) covered with tortoise proof fencing, (3) covered with plywood or a similarly impassable material, or (4) constructed with escape ramps at each end of the trench and every 1,000 ft in between (at a minimum). All coverings and fences will have zero ground clearance. If alternative (4) is selected, the trench or other excavation will be inspected periodically and following periods of substantial rainfall to ensure structural integrity and that escape ramps are functional. An open trench or other excavation will be inspected for entrapped animals immediately prior to backfilling. If, at any time, a tortoise is discovered within a trench, all activity associated with that trench will cease until an authorized biologist has removed the tortoise in accordance with USFWS approved guidelines (Desert Tortoise Council 1994, revised 1999).</p> <p>Trash and food items shall be disposed properly in predator-proof containers with resealing lids. Trash containers will be emptied and waste will be removed from the project area daily. Trash removal reduces the attractiveness of the area to opportunistic predator such as desert kit fox, coyotes, and common ravens.</p> <p>All construction, operation and maintenance activities shall be conducted in a manner that minimizes disturbance to vegetation and drainage channels.</p> <p>Cross-country travel and travel outside construction zones shall be prohibited.</p> <p>The Authorized biologist shall record each observation of desert tortoise handled. Information shall include the following: Location, date and time of observation; whether tortoise was handled, general health and whether it voided its bladder; location tortoise was moved from and location moved to; and unique physical characteristics of each tortoise. A final report shall be submitted to the USFWS's Southern Nevada Field Office in Las Vegas, Nevada, within 90 days of completion of the project.</p>	
<b>Migratory Birds</b>	<p>In compliance with the Migratory Bird Act of 1918, habitat-altering projects or portions of projects should be scheduled outside bird breeding season. In upland desert habitats and ephemeral washes containing upland species, the breeding season generally occurs between March 15 and July 30.</p> <p>For work occurring during the nesting period, a qualified biologist will survey the area for nests within 15 days prior to initial grading and vegetation removal. This shall include burrowing and ground nesting species in addition to those nesting in vegetation. If any active nests (containing eggs or young) are found, a 500-foot buffer area would be avoided until the young birds fledge.</p>	
<b>Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</b>	<p>Vegetation clearing activities associated with riparian habitat adjacent to the Colorado River would occur outside the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher breeding season. The Flycatcher's breeding season is May through August.</p> <p>Surveys for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher would be conducted by a qualified biologist one to three days prior to the removal of riparian vegetation. If nesting Flycatchers were detected in the action area, work activities would temporarily stop until the chicks have fledged.</p>	
		Authorized Biologist

<p><b>Bonytail chub and Razorback sucker</b></p>	<p>Construction-generated runoff or silt from vegetation removal could affect Bonytail chub and Razorback sucker populations in the river segment adjacent to the project and downstream unless mitigated. Other potential effects include the increase in access and use of the river for recreation, and thus direct disturbance to the chub and sucker. Reclamation proposes the following minimization measures for the Bonytail chub and Razorback sucker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During construction, keep disturbed areas as small as practical to minimize exposed soil and the potential for erosion.</li> <li>• Locate and properly dispose of waste and excess excavated materials outside wash drainages to avoid sedimentation.</li> <li>• Install silt fences, temporary earthen berms, temporary water bars, sediment traps, stone check dams, or other equivalent measures (including installing erosion-control measures around the perimeter of stockpiled fill material) as necessary, prior to construction.</li> <li>• Conduct regular site inspections during the construction period to ensure that erosion-control measures were properly installed and are functioning effectively.</li> <li>• Store, use, and dispose chemicals, fuels, and other toxic materials in an appropriate manner.</li> <li>• Vegetation removal along the riparian habitat adjacent to the Colorado River would be scheduled to occur between October and April to the greatest extent practicable to avoid late summer thunderstorm/flood events, and minimize the potential for work activities to result in runoff to the river. Alternatively, if vegetation removal is conducted between October and April, sedimentation barriers would be used between the work site and the Colorado River to minimize runoff to the river. Native vegetation would be planted in disturbed areas as soon as possible after construction is completed.</li> </ul> <p>No construction below the ordinary high water line during the spawning season of each species (January -June).</p>	<p>Construction Contractor; Environmental Contractor</p>
	<p>All vehicles, fuels, and other hazardous materials would be stored away from the Colorado River in such a way that any spills of toxic materials would not drain into the river.</p>	<p>Construction Contractor</p>
	<p>Equipment for dredging, placement of substrate materials, or other construction activities would be in good condition with no significant leaks of fuel or other substances that could be toxic to fish.</p>	<p>Construction Contractor</p>
	<p>Washing of equipment would not be conducted where wash water could drain into the river. This is especially important for equipment involved with pouring concrete. Washing stations would be set back away from the river and suitably diked to prevent runoff.</p>	<p>Construction Contractor</p>
	<p>Materials to absorb small spills of toxic materials would be available on site.</p>	<p>Construction Contractor</p>
	<p>Two interpretive panels would be placed near fishing piers and along the river walk trail. The interpretive panels would include the description of the Bonytail chub and Razorback sucker, the reasons why these species are federally endangered, and how the public can help protect these species.</p>	

<b>Noxious Weeds</b>	<p>In an effort to avoid introduction of nonnative/noxious plant species, no imported topsoil or hay bales will be used. Certified weed-free rice straw bales are permissible.</p> <p>Undesirable plant species will be controlled, as necessary. To prevent the introduction and minimize the spread of nonnative vegetation and noxious weeds, the following measures will be implemented during construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize soil disturbance.</li> <li>• Pressure-wash and/or steam clean all construction equipment to ensure that all equipment, machinery, rocks, gravel, or other materials are cleaned and weed-free before entering project areas.</li> <li>• Limit vehicle parking to existing disturbed areas.</li> <li>• Obtain all fill, rock, riprap, or additional topsoil from the project area, if possible. If not possible, obtaining weed-free sources from Reclamation-approved sources outside the project area is required.</li> <li>• Initiate restoration of disturbed sites immediately following construction activities.</li> <li>• Monitor disturbed areas following construction to identify growth of noxious weeds or nonnative vegetation.</li> <li>• Salvaging and storing desert soils and gypsum soils separately, replacing them as close as possible to their original locations, and ensuring they are not dumped along the trailside.</li> </ul>	Construction Contractor
<b>Revegetation and Restoration</b>	<p>Revegetation work would require the contractor to place desert soil, conserved during construction, along the corridor. The contractor would be responsible for collecting seeds of native species in the project area for propagation purposes. The propagated plants can then potentially be used to revegetate disturbed areas.</p> <p>When necessary, desert soil replacement techniques would be used to re-establish desert crust surfaces and minimize impacts from invasive plant species that often become established in disturbed soils along the roadway.</p>	Construction Contractor; Reclamation Contractor
<b>Air Quality</b>	<p>Application of water to construction areas to control dust and particulates.</p>	Construction Contractor
	<p>Construction activities would be coupled with water sprinkling or a palliative, as needed, to reduce fugitive dust plumes.</p>	Construction Contractor
	<p>Idling of construction vehicles would be limited to reduce construction equipment emissions.</p>	Construction Contractor
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<p>Should unknown archeological resources be uncovered during construction, work would be halted in the discovery area, the site secured, and Reclamation would consult according to 36 CFR 800.13 and, as appropriate, provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. In compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, Reclamation would also notify and consult representatives of American Indian tribes, likely to be culturally affiliated, for the proper treatment of human remains, funerary, and sacred objects should these be discovered during the project.</p> <p>Construction crews will be educated regarding procedures if subsurface cultural resources are encountered</p>	Reclamation and Environmental Contractor

	during construction.	Environmental Contractor
<b>Soundscapes</b>	Construction activities will take place during daylight working hours. Contractors would be required to properly maintain construction equipment (i.e., mufflers) to minimize noise.	Construction Contractor
	Restrict boat and personal watercraft access in vicinity of lagoon and fishing nodes.	Federal Agencies
<b>Access and Transportation</b>	Develop and implement a comprehensive traffic plan to address traffic delays due to construction activities and congestion.	Clark County; Construction Contractor
	During rehabilitation and restoration activities, visitors will be routed around or away from construction areas. Barricades will be placed around construction areas to prevent visitor entry.	Construction Contractor

## **WHY THE SELECTED ACTION WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

As defined by Section 1508.27 of Chapter 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR 1508.27), significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

- 1. Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an environmental impact statement:** No significant adverse impacts were identified that will require analysis in an environmental impact statement. As described in the environmental assessment, the selected action will have negligible or minor adverse effects on geology and soils, wetlands, vegetation and wildlife, cultural resources, and visual resources. Minor temporary impacts could occur to air quality, soundscapes, and transportation. There will be long-term beneficial effects to recreation, access and transportation, and socioeconomic resources.
- 2. The degree to which public health and safety are affected:** There will be no effects to public health or safety as a result of the selected action.
- 3. Any unique characteristics of the area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, wild and scenic rivers, ecologically critical areas, wetlands or floodplains:** As described in the environmental assessment, ecologically critical areas, floodplains, prime and unique farmland, and wild and scenic rivers will not be affected by the selected action. The selected action is anticipated to result in a negligible to minor level of effect on wetlands and a negligible effect on cultural resources. A Treatment Plan approved by the lead agency will result in improved documentation of cultural resources.
- 4. The degree to which impacts are likely to be highly controversial:** There were no highly controversial effects identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.
- 5. The degree to which the potential impacts are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:** There are no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks to the human environment identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.
- 6. Whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:** No significant adverse impacts were identified during preparation of the environmental assessment. Implementation of the selected action neither establishes a National Park Service precedent for future actions with significant effects, nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.
- 7. Whether the action is related to other actions that may have individual insignificant impacts but cumulatively significant effects:** As described in the environmental assessment, cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the selected action with identified impacts from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and actions. Past, current, and future projects that could contribute cumulative effects include residential development, Laughlin Civic Center area improvements, and a proposal to construct multi-use playing fields and multi-use trails in the vicinity of the project area.

The selected action, along with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, will have minor, adverse cumulative effects to geology and soils, wetlands, vegetation and wildlife, soundscapes, and

visual resources. Minor cumulative impacts to air quality will be temporary. There will be long-term beneficial effects to recreation, access and transportation, and socioeconomic resources.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect historic properties in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other significant scientific, archeological, or cultural resources:** As described in the environmental assessment, no historic properties or properties eligible for listing in the NRHP will be affected by project implementation. The selected action is anticipated to result in a negligible level of effect on cultural resources.

**9. The degree to which an action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat:** The selected action was evaluated for potential effects to the desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, razorback sucker, and bonytail chub. Based on conservation measures incorporated into the selected action, NPS and Reclamation determined that the project is not likely to adversely affect the southwestern willow flycatcher, the razorback sucker, or the bonytail chub. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with this determination in a biological opinion (File No. 1-5-07-F-458) issued on May 7, 2007.

The NPS and Reclamation completed formal consultation with the USFWS pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, for the desert tortoise. Formal consultation was required due to the potential for impacts caused by construction in desert tortoise habitat. In the biological opinion referenced above, USFWS concluded that the selected action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise and that the conservation measures proposed by NPS and Reclamation will substantially minimize the effects of the action. NPS and Reclamation will strictly adhere to the terms and conditions listed in the biological opinion.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment:** The selected action violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY CONSULTATION**

### Scoping

Beginning in 2000, options for developing recreational facilities in the Laughlin area were evaluated through various public and agency venues. Documents analyzing commercial and noncommercial recreation options, analyzing the economic feasibility of implementing these options, and a Master Plan led to the alternatives analyzed in the EA. The options developed in the studies resulted from consulting city and county use plans, visitor surveys, commercial service experts, representatives and government officials of Laughlin and Clark County, Nevada, and Bullhead City and Mohave County, Arizona; the NPS; the BLM; Reclamation; and, various local groups and organizations. A visitor survey conducted with the aid of the Laughlin Chamber of Commerce and all of the Laughlin casinos resulted in 600 questionnaires providing information for the commercial recreation study. While a variety of commercial service alternatives were recognized in this study, several noncommercial facilities were recommended to meet the needs of visitors and residents.

An agency scoping meeting was held on June 15, 2006, to determine the issues and resources of concern. A public scoping period occurred between July 2 and August 13, 2006. As part of the public involvement process, a Legal Notice inviting public comment was published on July 2, 2006, in the newspaper of record, the Mohave Daily News. A copy of the meeting notice was also posted in a public location at the Laughlin Town Manager's office. The public was invited to comment via email, mail, comment form, and orally. During this public scoping period, Reclamation and the cooperating agencies held a public scoping meeting in Laughlin on July 13, 2006. A total of three comments were

received during the scoping period. Two comment forms containing the three comments were submitted at the public scoping meeting. No other comments were received. The issues raised and responses are as follows:

Comment #1 suggested that the observation point interpretive material include a display that identifies distant geographic and other interesting objects or locations as the observation point offers a wide viewing area.

*The comment was passed to Reclamation for consideration during development of the interpretive materials.*

Comment #2 suggested consideration of bird watching structures/blinds to help promote ecotourism.

*Under all action alternatives, the amount and diversity of riparian habitat would be increased and is expected likewise to increase both bird use and bird watching opportunities. The fishing nodes and shade structures could serve as wildlife viewing stations, while the Riverwalk and water features in the Day-Use Area are expected to provide improved bird and wildlife viewing. The Audubon Signature Golf Course may also improve bird watching opportunities, as revegetation efforts will include native plants that would be attractive to resident and migratory birds.*

Comment #3 suggested providing parking for buses for ecotourists and other groups.

*As proposed, Trailhead 1 would include parking for recreational vehicles and would accommodate bus parking.*

Based on internal and public scoping comments and applicable federal law and regulations, Reclamation determined that an EA would be the appropriate level of compliance for the Laughlin Regional Park and Regional Heritage Greenway Trails-North Reach. Public scoping comments were used in the alternatives development process and the analysis presented in the EA.

#### Agency Consultation and Permitting Requirements

An agency scoping meeting was conducted on June 15, 2006. Cooperating agencies included the NPS and BLM. The comments and suggestions led to the content presented in the EA. Reclamation is also consulting with the Corps, USFWS, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and several Native American Tribes.

#### *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)*

Reclamation is coordinating with the Corps to determine the requirements necessary for this project to be in compliance. The project proponent will obtain all required permits for the project before work begins. An environmental contractor will submit Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act permit applications. Permits will be obtained prior to project implementation.

#### *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

A biological opinion and informal consultation were issued in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act on May 7, 2007, and were based on information provided in the Reclamation memorandum to the USFWS on November 9, 2006; the biological assessment for the subject project received on December 5, 2006; a site visit to the action area was conducted by USFWS and Reclamation biologists on January 11, 2007; electronic mail between the USFWS and Reclamation staff; discussions between USFWS and Reclamation staff; and USFWS files. Mitigation and minimization measures described in the biological opinion will be implemented to reduce impacts on

the federally listed as threatened desert tortoise. Mitigation and minimization measures described in the informal consultation will be implemented to reduce impacts to the federally listed as endangered bonytail chub, razorback sucker, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

#### *Nevada State Historic Preservation Office*

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act specifies that federal agencies must take into account the affects of their actions on historic places, that is places included in, or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and they must allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, agency representatives, and other interested parties the opportunity to comment regarding the proposed action (36 CFR 800). A Memorandum of Agreement for the recovery of significant information from sites 26CK6658 and 25CK6650 and the avoidance of sites 26CK6922B, 26CK6922D, and 26CK6922E, will be executed between Reclamation, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historical Preservation, Clark County, and other parties, agreeing to develop and implement a treatment plan for these historic properties.

Historical and cultural resource surveys were completed for most of the project area in 2002 and 2003. Areas within the project area not covered during that survey were surveyed in 2006. Consultation with the Reclamation archeologist was completed after review of the cultural survey information. Mitigation measures have been established to preserve and/or mitigate adverse effects on historical sites located within, and adjacent to, the project area.

#### *Native American Consultation*

On January 4, 2006, Reclamation sent letters introducing the Riverwalk Trail portion of the project to the following tribes: Ft. Mojave, Chemehuevi, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Havasupai, Hualapai and the Las Vegas Paiute. No responses were received. On August 7, 2006, Reclamation hosted a public scoping meeting in the city of Laughlin for representatives of each of these tribes. Telephone calls were also placed to the tribes during the week before the meeting. No tribal representatives attended the meeting. Native American consultations will be ongoing throughout the planning and implementation of this project.

#### Public Review and Comments

The EA was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during a 30-day comment period from December 1, 2006 through December 30, 2006. The document was also available for review at the Laughlin Library, the Clark County Laughlin Town Manager's Office, Clark County Department of Public Works, and at NewFields International (preparers of the document). In addition, as part of the public involvement process, a Legal Notice inviting public comment was published on December 1, 2006 in the newspaper of record, the Mohave Daily News. The public was invited to comment via email, mail, comment form, and orally.

During the comment period, a public meeting was held in Laughlin, Nevada on December 15, 2006 to solicit public comment regarding the document. A copy of the meeting notice was posted at the Laughlin Town Manager's office. A total of 11 comments were collected from comment forms or from oral comments made during the public meeting. Comments consisted of questions regarding the types of facilities that would be provided, design elements, and operational details. No modifications to the preferred alternative were required as a result of public comments. No email or mail-in comments were received.

#### **IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES OR VALUES**

In addition to reviewing the list of significance criteria, Lake Mead National Recreation Area determined that implementation of NPS elements of the selected action will not constitute an impairment of park resources or values or alter opportunities for the enjoyment of the park. This

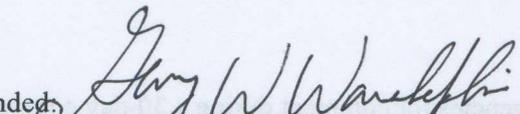
conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the impacts described in the environmental assessment, agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker in accordance with the NPS Management Policies 2006. As described in the environmental assessment, implementation of NPS elements of the selected action will not result in major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of Lake Mead National Recreation Area; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's General Management Plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

### CONCLUSION AND BASIS FOR DETERMINATION

Based on the analysis completed in the environmental assessment, the capability of the mitigation measures to reduce, avoid, or eliminate impacts, and with due consideration of public response, the National Park Service determined that the NPS elements of the selected action do not constitute an action that normally requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement. The NPS components of the project, either alone or in combination with the rest of the project, have no unacceptable or adverse impacts or significant environmental consequences.

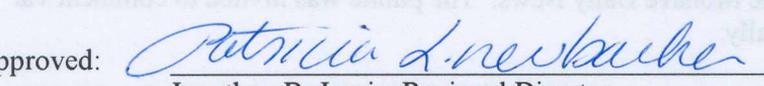
Negative environmental impacts that could occur are negligible to minor in effect. There are no unmitigated adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, known ethnographic resources, or other unique characteristics of the region. There are no highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence identified. Implementation of the action would not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law. There are no significant impacts to the affected environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement will not be prepared for this project, and the selected action may be implemented as soon as practicable.

Recommended:

  
 William K. Dickinson, Superintendent  
 Lake Mead National Recreation Area

7/5/07  
 Date

Approved:

  
 Jonathan B. Jarvis, Regional Director  
 Pacific West Region

7/23/07  
 Date