



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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## National Park Service News Release

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### Court approves settlement on National World War I Memorial

BARSTOW, CA– The U.S. District Court for the Central District of California approved a settlement agreement yesterday between the Department of Justice and the American Civil Liberties Union to exchange an acre of land at Sunrise Rock for a donated parcel of equal value. The Sunrise Rock parcel will be conveyed to the Veterans Home of California–Barstow, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #385E.

Approval of the settlement is the next step in resolving issues involving Sunrise Rock, where a number of crosses have been maintained since World War I. Sunrise Rock was included within the boundaries of Mojave National Preserve when it was established in 1994.

In 2001, a lawsuit was filed against the National Park Service requesting an injunction to prohibit the display of a cross on Sunrise Rock. A 2003 Act of Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to transfer a parcel including Sunrise Rock to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in an attempt to resolve the lawsuit. The district court enjoined the government from implementing that Act, and the Ninth Circuit affirmed the district court's order. On April 28, 2010, the Supreme Court reversed the order. The Ninth Circuit received the Supreme Court's judgment and remanded the case back to the district court to reconsider the land exchange.

Approval of the agreement completes court action on the settlement. The next step is to move forward with the land exchange. A required survey of the one-acre site is complete. Appraisals of both parcels in the exchange will occur in the next few months. The National Park Service expects to complete the land exchange before the end of the year.

After the land exchange is complete, the National Park Service will install a fence around the parcel with signs indicating that the plot is private property. Two entrance areas will remain unfenced to allow access. The National Park Service will install a plaque on Sunrise Rock describing this memorial commemorating American war veterans.

“We look forward to working with the Veterans of Foreign Wars in completing the land exchange,” said Mojave National Preserve Superintendent Stephanie R. Dubois. “We are requesting that everyone be patient as we complete the land exchange, and we would like to remind folks that no cross can legally be displayed until the land exchange is complete.”

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