

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECORD OF DECISION

**DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLANS
COTTONWOOD COVE AND KATHERINE LANDING**

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA and MOHAVE COUNTY, ARIZONA
December 2014

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS) at Lake Mead National Recreation Area has prepared this Record of Decision for the *Restoration of the Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing Development Concept Plans Final Environmental Impact Statement (DCPs/FEIS)*. This document includes a brief description of the project background and objectives, a statement of the decision and discussion of the basis for the decision, a summary of the other alternatives considered, a description of the environmentally preferred alternative, a description of the measures that will be implemented to minimize or avoid environmental harm (including a Statement of Finding for Floodplains), and an overview of public involvement and agency consultation.

In addition, pursuant to NPS Management Policies, the determination of no impairment of park resources and values is attached.

BACKGROUND

Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing are two of the major developed areas on Lake Mohave in Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Cottonwood Cove is located on the Nevada shore of the lake, approximately 22 miles north of the Davis Dam. Katherine Landing is located near the southern end of the lake in Arizona, approximately 1.5 miles north of the Davis Dam. The majority of the Katherine development lies within Katherine Wash, but also extends to the north, encompassing South and North Telephone Cove, Cabinsite Point, and Princess Cove. Both developed areas accommodate a wide variety of recreational activities and provide public launch facilities and commercial marina services as well as other public use and support facilities.

The 1986 Lake Mead National Recreation Area General Management Plan (1986 GMP) addressed the need to provide recreational opportunities while preserving and protecting natural and cultural resources. It established land-based management zones and included development concept plans for Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing that identified limits on the development, established the number and type of facilities, and addressed flood hazards. The 1986 GMP's vision for both areas was to accommodate increasing use, enhance the visitor experience, and mitigate flood hazards.

The 2003 Lake Mead National Recreation Area Lake Management Plan (2003 LMP) established water-based management zones and provided further guidance for the long-term protection of park resources while allowing a range of recreational opportunities to support visitor needs. At Cottonwood Cove, the 2003 LMP authorized an increase in boating capacity and called for separation of public and commercial marina operations. At Katherine Landing, the 2003 LMP maintained existing boating capacities and provided for separating recreational activities.

The purpose of the development concept plans for Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing is to reevaluate the implementation strategies that were identified in the 1986 GMP and to incorporate the

concepts and carrying capacities that were approved in the 2003 LMP. Each development concept plan provides an integrated plan for development with site-specific guidance for the extent, type, and location of facilities and services that is consistent with the management direction and intent established in the both plans. The objectives for the DCPs include:

- enhance visitor and staff safety
- enhance the recreational experience
- protect and enhance the natural, scenic, and cultural resources of the areas
- provide necessary and appropriate facilities and services for visitors

The primary issues affecting the management of the Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing developed areas are as follows:

- providing flood mitigation
- enhancing shoreline-based day-use opportunities and facilities to meet a growing and changing demand
- improving the safety and ease of access, providing better organized and more convenient parking improving NPS campgrounds to function effectively to meet visitor needs while protecting the cultural landscape
- providing adequate visitor information and education programs and determining if commercial services and NPS educational and interpretive services be provided in a joint facility, enhancing operational facilities to function effectively and efficiently, meeting the needs of both park staff and visitors
- identifying which concession facilities or services are still necessary and appropriate at these sites for public use and enjoyment of the park

DECISION (Selected Action)

Upon consideration of the concerns and issues raised during the planning and environmental impact analysis process, with due consideration for all public comments received during scoping as well as review of the Draft EIS, and in light of applicable laws, regulations, and NPS guidance, the NPS has selected Alternative 3, Enhance Visitor Experience and Park Operations. Alternative 3 was identified as the park's Preferred Alternative in the October 2013 *Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing Development Concept Plans /Final Environmental Impact Statement*. The Selected Action is substantially the same as described for Alternative 3 in the Final EIS. The Selected Alternative includes the following primary components that will be implemented as staffing and funding allow.

Cottonwood Cove

- New day-use areas (picnic and no-boat areas) in Ski Cove, and designated trail to Cottontail Cove; existing day-use areas in Cottonwood Cove remain.
- Trailer village phased out near the end of the next concession contract pending an economic feasibility analysis. Site redeveloped for RV sites or concession operated overnight accommodations.
- Motel expands as needed; additional structures double capacity and include meeting space (for hosting meetings and other events). This may be done with a second story or another structure.
- Upper campground redeveloped for concessioner and volunteer housing; Volunteer loop is configured for large vehicles with hookups; one loop retained with no changes for visitor camping (tent/car).
- Maintain character of Mission 66 while responding to changing needs to the extent possible.

- Use lower campground for picnic uses during the summer months; operate as campground for winter season.
- New paved loop road provides alternate route to motel area, with spur to Ski Cove.
- Increase parking capacity and allow marina expansion as per the lake management plan.
- Construct engineered system of diversion dikes and concrete channels to convey the 500 year flood to better protect visitor areas.
- Maintain the Early Warning Detection System, install flood warning signs, and develop evacuation plan.

Katherine Landing

- Flood control recommendations would be implemented to the 500-year flood level.
- Rehabilitate or replace existing store and restaurant. Integrate some visitor orientation/exhibit space and outdoor gathering areas.
- Motel removed; site redeveloped for greatly expanded visitor parking near lake. Provide other forms of overnight accommodations (e.g., RV park [pull-through parking, utilities, cabins, park models, or similar]) .
- Trailer village phased out near the end of the next concession contract pending an economic feasibility analysis. The site would be redeveloped as part of an expanded, accessible campground that would be concessioner-run and would accommodate larger vehicles (larger sites with pull-through parking and hookups, etc.). Some portion of the campground would retain its current configuration for tent/car camping. Cabins may be part of the mix (exact mix of accommodations to be determined).
- New paved loop serving both north and south areas of the development (housing/administration area to campground loop D).
- Consolidated NPS offices and operations (law enforcement/emergency, interpretation offices, etc.) in the vicinity of the NPS maintenance area.
- Retain NPS maintenance area in same location.
- Construct engineered system of diversion dikes, channels, and detention basin to convey probable maximum flood flows through North and South Katherine Washes.
- Install Early Warning Detection System for Katherine Landing.
- Place flood warning signs and develop an evacuation plan for Katherine Landing and North and South Arizona Telephone Coves.

Princess Cove, Cabinsite Point, and North and South Arizona Telephone Cove

- New picnic facilities at Cabinsite Point and provide additional parking and allow backcountry camping at some of the former cabin sites.
- New helipad at Princess Cove and reconfigure intersection of Cabinsite Point and Princess Cove roads.
- Developed picnic area at North Arizona Telephone Cove and design access roads to eliminate or greatly reduce exposure to flood hazards at both North and South Arizona Telephone Coves.
- If launch capacity at Katherine Landing is reduced due to flood control, the park may consider paving and formalizing more of the overflow parking area at Princess Cove and improving the launch at North Arizona Telephone Cove or at Cabinsite Point, to align with established capacity levels set by the lake management plan.

The approved development concept plan/final environmental impact statement is a programmatic document covering both Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing areas. More detailed information would be developed during the individual project design stage. Based on this further design information, additional natural and cultural resource surveys and supplementary Section 106 and NEPA compliance will be tiered from this document.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative 1, No Action

This alternative reflects current management of the developed area. This alternative would essentially maintain existing conditions at Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing areas. The existing visitor, National Park Service, and concession support facilities would be maintained with minimal changes.

Alternative 2, Implement Previous Planning Proposals

Alternative 2 would maintain many of the existing facilities and continue to implement some of the specific actions identified in the general management plan and the lake management plan that have not yet been completed. Flood hazards would be addressed through structural protection, relocation of some facilities, and use of a flood warning system.

At Cottonwood Cove a new visitor contact / ranger station would be constructed near the launch ramp. The existing ranger station would be converted for use as a campground office. Overnight visitor facilities would be retained in their current locations. The existing motel could be expanded. A new day-use area (picnic and no-boat area) would be developed in Ski Cove. The trailer village would remain, or, over time, portions would be converted to a short-term recreational vehicle park. The main access road would remain two lanes through the developed area. Parking capacity would be increased and the marina expansion would be allowed to the carrying capacity authorized in the lake management plan. The National Park Service and concessioner housing and maintenance areas would be relocated to the bluff south of the access road.

At Katherine Landing overnight visitor facilities would be retained in their current locations and may be improved but not expanded. The motel would be renovated and the campground would be minimally rehabilitated (for Americans with Disabilities Act access). The trailer village would remain, or, over time, portions would be converted to a short-term recreational vehicle park. Commercial services (excluding the marina) would be expanded on their current sites. The marina is currently at the carrying capacity authorized in the lake management plan. The parking capacity authorized in the lake management plan would be maintained; however, parking would be developed closer to the lakeshore and the furthest parking area would be removed. Concessioner housing and maintenance areas would be retained in their current locations. NPS maintenance would be relocated to a new area on a bluff northwest of the developed area near the current water treatment plant.

The facilities at Princess Cove would be retained. Cabinsite Point would be closed to motorized boat launching and the no-boat area enlarged. A new paved access road on higher ground between North and South Arizona Telephone Coves would be constructed. To improve ease of launch, a new concrete two-lane launch ramp would be established.

ELEMENTS CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED

The Council on Environmental Quality guidelines for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to analyze all "reasonable" alternatives that substantially meet the purpose and need for the proposed action. Under NEPA, an alternative may be eliminated from detailed study for the following reasons [40 CFR 1504.14 (a)]:

- “Technical or economic infeasibility;” the inability to meet project objectives or resolve need for the project in a cost-efficient manner
- Duplication of other less environmentally damaging alternatives
- Conflicts with an up-to-date valid plan, statement of purpose and significance, or other policy; therefore would require a major change in that plan or policy to implement
- Environmental impacts too great

The following elements were considered during the alternatives development phase of the planning process, but were not carried forward for full environmental impact analysis because they met one or more of the above criteria.

Cottonwood Cove

Relocation of Marina to Ski and Cottontail Coves

- Separating certain functions and uses — in particular, separating the store/restaurant and launch ramp from the marina — would negatively impact concession operations and visitor experience.
- Extensive facility infrastructure would be required to support a functional marina in this new location — for instance, roads, sizable parking area, fuel service, utilities, and new support buildings. This extensive development would be expensive to build, operate, and maintain, and would result in impacts on natural resources (likely terrestrial and aquatic).
- Limited space is available for parking and other support within Ski or Cottontail Coves, so a marina would probably be infeasible.

Motel Function Relocated from Lakeshore or Removed Altogether

- The existing motel by the lakeshore is an appropriate and successful component of the current visitor experience.
- The motel is profitable in its current location.

Conversion of Lower Campground to Year-round Picnic Area

- Conversion would result in cultural resource impacts. The cultural landscape is associated with the Mission 66 period of NPS development and is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Removing camping near the lakeshore at Cottonwood Cove would negatively impact the visitor experience. The demand for day use of this area is in the summer, when camping is in lesser demand; so applying a different management approach (i.e., splitting camping / day use) by season seems to be a better solution.

New Law Enforcement / Emergency Service Facility on Current Site of NPS Housing

- There would be impacts on cultural resources because conversion to this type facility would require removing or transforming contributing historic structures from a property eligible in the National Register.
- There is limited space in this area for this function.

Katherine Landing

Marina Reconfigured and Boat Launch Relocated. Rationale for dismissing this element includes the following:

- This idea was proposed to provide enough space to accommodate the boat launch and the outlet for the flood control channel for Katherine Wash. Initially it was unclear whether the proposed

conceptual design for flood channel (HDR 2004b) would allow boat launch function to continue in this location.

- This would require extensive facilities infrastructure development. Analysis indicates that the cost to construct the new boat launch and related facilities would be very high.
- Relocating the boat launch is likely to result in adverse environmental impacts.
- Further flood control design is necessary and pending; however, it is believed that a solution could be reached that would reduce the size of the outlet and allow the boat launch to remain.

Expansion of Motel. Rationale for dismissing this element includes the following:

- Financial analysis indicates that motel expansion and rehab would be financially infeasible. Motel occupancy rates are very low so expansion is not warranted.
- National Park Service Management Policies state that concession facilities must be necessary and appropriate. One of the factors for determining whether a concession facility is necessary and appropriate is an analysis of whether a commercial operation can be provided outside park boundaries. Due to the significant presence of affordable lodging facilities located immediately outside the park in Bullhead City, Arizona and Laughlin, Nevada, within easy driving distance of Katherine Landing, overnight accommodations are no longer necessary and appropriate at Katherine Landing.
- Expansion was proposed by the GMP. Because this specific proposal was not feasible or necessary and appropriate it was adjusted in the corresponding alternative (alternative 2).

Reuse Motel Structures for NPS Administration. Rationale for dismissing this element includes the following:

- This element does not appear to be a good location for this type of facility. Administrative and support functions would require a substantial footprint. Public use occurs in the immediate surroundings. There is a conflict between these types of uses (for example, emergency access difficulties).

BASIS FOR DECISION

After careful consideration of each alternative and its foreseeable environmental impacts, the expressed purpose and need for federal action, and all public and agency comments, including comments on the *Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing Development Concept Plans/Draft EIS*, Alternative 3 has been selected for implementation. This alternative best complies with NPS management policies, and meets the management objectives to enhance visitor and staff safety and the recreational experience, protect and enhance the natural, scenic, and cultural resources of the areas, and provide necessary and appropriate facilities and services for visitors.

The NPS has determined that the Selected Action will:

At Cottonwood Cove

- Provide improved protection of public recreation facilities and the health and safety of visitors and employees.
- Enhance opportunities for shoreline day use and overnight accommodations by improving the quality of existing facilities and by distributing day use.
- Maintain character of Mission 66 to the extent possible
- Improve circulation and increase parking capacity and allow marina expansion as per the lake management plan.

At Katherine Landing

- Provide improved protection of public recreation facilities and the health and safety of visitors and employees.
- Improve visitor experience and services by rehabilitating or replacing existing waterfront facilities and integrating visitor contact/exhibit space into the redesign, expanding visitor parking and trail system near the lake.
- Enhance park operations by consolidating NPS offices and operations.
- Provide expanded and updated overnight accommodations.

As documented in the final EIS, the following key factors support implementation of the Selected Action:

- The environmental impact analyses demonstrate that the Selected Action will have short-term and long-term minor impacts to natural resources.
- Some of the actions could result in long-term, direct, local, moderate to major, adverse effects on historic structures and cultural landscapes in order to improve, enhance, and update the developed areas to meet contemporary visitor uses and provide a long-term substantial benefit to safety for people and property in the floodplains.
- The Selected Action has a high likelihood of achieving the expressed purpose and objectives as articulated in the draft and final EIS.
- The Selected Action that is consistent with the management direction and intent established in the general management plan and lake management plan.
- The Selected Action is fully compliant with NPS's mission and policies, and other pertinent laws and regulations.
- The Selected Action specifies all feasible and prudent measures to minimize environmental harm.
- The Selected Action was crafted through several years of public involvement and agency coordination.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The NPS is required to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in its NEPA documents for public review and comment. Guidance from the CEQ states 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" (CEQ 1981).

The NPS has identified alternative 1, the no-action alternative, as the environmentally preferable alternative. Although the other alternatives would greatly improve visitor experience and safety, overall, alternative 1 would result in the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protect and preserve cultural resources among the alternatives. Alternative 1 would leave the existing facilities in place, essentially maintaining conditions at status quo, resulting in minor additional impacts from facility maintenance and visitor use. There would be no new impacts to cultural resources and they would continue to be managed similar to existing practices. As a result, after completing the environmental analysis, the NPS identified the no-action alternative as the environmentally preferable alternative and the alternative that best meets the definition established by the CEQ.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

Mitigation measures are specific actions designed to reduce, minimize, or eliminate impacts of alternatives and to protect Lake Mead National Recreation Area resources and visitors. Monitoring activities are actions to be implemented during or following project implementation to assess levels of impact. The following measures relate to construction activities and facility operation.

Vegetation and Soils

- Topsoil will be collected and stockpiled from construction areas. Upon completion of construction, topsoil would be placed in disturbed areas to enhance the recovery of native vegetation and reduce erosion.
- Construction equipment will be pressure washed prior to entering the park to ensure it is free of foreign soils and plant material.
- Vegetation salvage will occur within project boundaries as deemed appropriate by NPS resource managers. Salvaged plants will be stored at the park's native plant nursery and used to revegetate the project site.
- Disturbed areas will be monitored for two to three years following construction to identify exotic vegetation. Remedial or control of exotic vegetation will be completed in accordance with the recreation area's exotic plant management plan.
- Staging for a construction office, construction vehicles and equipment, and materials storage would be located in previously disturbed areas, outside of high visitor use areas, and would be clearly identified in advance.

Special Status Species

- Construction activities will comply with all applicable conservation measures and terms and conditions contained in the 2002 and 2010 programmatic biological opinions for the federally listed Mojave desert tortoise and its critical habitat, the Southwestern willow flycatcher, the bonytail chub and its critical habitat, and the razorback sucker and its critical habitat, and the 2005 biological and conference opinion for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.
- Project areas will be surveyed for burrowing owls prior to construction. Any identified burrows will be avoided until after the young fledged or collapsed while unoccupied. To minimize potential impacts on banded Gila monsters, any found within a construction area will be captured and relocated by a qualified biologist.
- Based on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, land clearing or other surface disturbance will be conducted outside the avian breeding season or have a qualified biologist survey the area prior to clearing. If a migratory bird nest were found with nestlings present, impacts will be avoided until birds fledge.

Water and Air Quality

- A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit would be obtained and a stormwater pollution prevention plan prepared as required for specific projects. Any activities involving dredging or the placement of fill material in waters of the United States would comply with requirements of section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act and with other applicable state permit programs.
- Best management practices (earthen berms, silt fences, etc.) will be implemented to keep stormwater runoff sediments from entering Lake Mohave from construction areas. All erosion control materials such as straw bales must be certified as weed free.

- Best management practices will be in place during refueling and other activities that may release hazardous materials into the environment. A hazardous spill plan will be developed prior to construction projects.
- Marina operators will be required to follow the Best Management Practices, Watercraft and Marina Operations, Dry Boat Storage, and Boat Repair Services for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.
- Dust abatement measures will be developed to minimize impacts on air quality during construction.

Visitor Experience and Safety

- Barricades, construction fencing, signs, or other measures as appropriate will be used around construction areas to discourage visitors from entering construction areas.
- Construction work will be conducted to avoid peak visitor use times (i.e., weekends, holidays) to the extent practical to minimize inconveniences to park visitors.
- Public information regarding implementation of projects located in public areas will be made available.
- Facilities will be accessible to visitors, including those with disabilities, in compliance with federal standards.

Visual Quality

- The design of the buildings and other structures shall, to the extent possible, use materials, colors, textures, screening, landscaping, and native vegetation in order to blend into the natural setting and harmonize with surrounding buildings.
- Structures will be sited and sized so that they do not compete with views and vistas and are incorporated into the surrounding landscape.
- In order to blend into the surrounding landscape, cut and fill slopes will be rounded and topsoil will be salvaged and placed on the roughened and contoured slopes and revegetated.

Cultural Resources

- Continue to develop inventories for and oversee research about archeological, historical, and ethnographic resources to better understand and manage the resources. Continue to manage cultural resources and collections following federal regulations and NPS guidelines.
- Subject projects to site-specific planning and compliance. Make efforts to avoid adverse impacts through adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation, Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings, and Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.
- Make use of screening and/or sensitive design that will be compatible with historic resources. Consult with the Arizona and Nevada State Historic Preservation Offices as needed under Section 106. If adverse impacts could not be avoided, mitigate these impacts through a consultation process with all interested parties.
- Inventory all unsurveyed areas in the recreation area for archeological, historical, and ethnographic resources as well as cultural and ethnographic landscapes.
- Document cultural and ethnographic landscapes in the recreation area and identify treatments.
- Conduct archeological site monitoring and routine protection. Conduct data recovery excavations at archeological sites threatened with destruction, where protection or site avoidance during

design and construction is infeasible.

- Avoid or mitigate impacts to ethnographic resources. Mitigation will include maintaining access to traditional use and spiritual areas and screening new development from traditional use areas.
- Continue ongoing consultations with culturally associated American Indian people. Protect sensitive traditional use areas to the extent feasible.
- Wherever possible, locate projects and facilities in previously disturbed or existing developed areas.
- Design facilities to avoid known or suspected archeological resources.
- If previously unknown cultural resources are discovered during project work, cease all work in the area until the site can be evaluated by a qualified person and appropriate treatment can be implemented.
- Encourage visitors through the park's interpretive programs to respect and leave undisturbed any inadvertently encountered archeological resources and to respect and leave undisturbed any offerings placed by American Indians.
- Strictly adhere to NPS standards and guidelines on the display and care of artifacts, including the U.S. Department of the Interior's Museum Management Handbook. This will include artifacts used in exhibits in the visitor center.
- For structures and landscapes, mitigation measures include documentation according to standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record, and Historic American Landscape Survey. The level of this documentation will depend on significance (national, state, or local) and individual attributes (an individually significant structure, individual elements of a cultural landscape, etc.) and be determined in consultation with the state historic preservation officer and tribal historic preservation office.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

Project Scoping

Initial NPS planning team meetings were held with Lake Mead National Recreation Area staff and concessioners from the Forever Resorts at Cottonwood Cove and Seven Crown Resorts at Katherine Landing in late October and early November 2007, to identify current operational issues and concerns.

The formal public scoping process for the development concept plans for Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing was initiated on August 13, 2008, with the publication of the Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement in the Federal Register. The Federal Register notice was also posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website.

In September 2008, a scoping press release was sent to television stations, newspapers, magazines, and radio stations in southern Nevada, Arizona, and southern California announcing a series of public scoping meetings in the area inviting the public to share their ideas concerns, and future visions for enhancing the Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing areas of Lake Mohave.

During that initial phase a flyer was made available throughout the recreation area notifying the public about the need for the Draft Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing Development Concept Plans and the Environmental Impact Statement process and schedule, and a scoping newsletter describing the overall planning process and outlining an initial list of issues to be addressed by the planning team was posted to the Lake Mead NRA website as well as on the PEPC website. In addition, over 400 printed copies of the newsletter were distributed to the public.

The public scoping comment period extended through November 15, 2008.

Three public meetings using the open house format were held between October 27 and October 29, 2008 in Bullhead City, Arizona; Searchlight, Nevada; and Boulder City, Nevada. A total of 65 people attended the public meetings, including individuals, business, and representatives from Laughlin City Manager's Office, Searchlight Town Advisory Board, Clark County Comprehensive Planning, Bureau of Reclamation, Colorado River Heritage Greenway Trails, Lake Mohave Boat Owners Association, Cottonwood Cove Trailer Owners Association, Forever Resorts, and Seven Crown Resorts.

Comments were recorded on flip charts at the meetings. In addition, approximately 110 public comment letters and comments posted to the PEPC website were also received. The most frequent input were letters from trailer owners at Cottonwood Cove expressing support for including the trailer village in the plan. The public also identified a variety of issues and concerns on topics such as marina and launch ramp conditions, congestion, provision of non-motorized visitor / no-boat opportunities, enhancement of visitor facilities and services, and protection of the Cottonwood Cove viewshed and motel character. The Laughlin Chamber of Commerce provided a copy of a 2003 report outlining a range of issues and recommendations for improving the lower Lake Mohave area.

A flyer further soliciting public input was distributed in September 2009. Twenty-seven responses were posted to the PEPC website. A second newsletter was mailed out and posted on the PEPC website describing the key issues and different options or actions that could be taken to address the identified issues. The public comment period for this newsletter extended from March 11, 2010 to July 31, 2010. During the public comment period, eight comments were received through the PEPC website. The comments ranged from concerns on the trailer village to area trails.

Public Review of the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's notice of filing and release of the draft document was published in the Federal Register on February 15, 2013 (the NPS notice of availability was published on February 27, 2013). Approximately 250 copies of the draft were distributed to government agencies, public interest groups, businesses, media, local libraries, and individuals. The document was also posted on the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website for review. Public review of the Draft Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing Development Concept Plans/ Environmental Impact Statement was initiated in February of 2013, and the document was on public review through April 27, 2013.

Three public meetings were held in the region: Boulder City, NV (April 9, 2013), Bullhead City, AZ (April 10, 2013), and Searchlight, NV (April 11, 2013). A total of approximately 200 individuals attended the three meetings. The meetings were primarily informational in nature, intended to provide opportunities for the public to meet members of the NPS planning team, learn about the plan, and have questions answered. Attendees were encouraged to provide comments in writing to the planning team.

Public comments were received through letters, e-mail messages, PEPC, and public meetings. The planning team received 99 correspondences during the public comment period. Of the 99 received, one was from a federal agency, two from state agencies, one from a business, and one from a recreational group. The remaining 94 were from individuals. Comments were primarily received from California, Arizona, and Nevada. Thirteen general concern statements were identified based on the substantive issues that surfaced during the public comment period.

Final Environmental Impact Statement

On November 14, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published its notice of filing and release of the final EIS in the Federal Register, initiating a minimum 30 days "no action" waiting period through December 15, 2014. The NPS notice of availability was published in the Federal Register on November 13, 2014.

The alternatives presented in the final development concept plan/environmental impact statement were not substantially changed from the draft document.

Federal, State, & Tribal Consultation and Coordination

Nevada and Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer

Scoping letters were sent to the Nevada and Arizona state historic preservation offices on September 24, 2008. Newsletter updates have been sent to these offices as part of an ongoing agency coordination and public involvement during the project. In 2012, the draft development concept plan was submitted to the Nevada and Arizona state historic preservation offices. Information received from these offices was incorporated into the alternatives and mitigations presented in the final development concept plan / environmental impact statement. In 2014, the National Park Service began consultations with the Nevada and Arizona state historic preservation officers entered into programmatic agreements designed to mitigate adverse impacts to cultural resources.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

In 2014 the National Park Service invited the council to participate in the development of mitigation programmatic agreements. Copies of the draft and final development concept plans / environmental impact statements were provided to the council.

American Indian Consultation

There are numerous Yuman-speaking American Indian tribes with interest in this area of Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Letters and newsletters were sent to these tribes to inform them of the planning process and to invite their input. Tribal consultation has also been conducted through participation and sharing of project updates by the park's American Indian liaison during routine government-to-government consultation meetings. Tribes have been invited to sign as concurring parties on programmatic agreements with the Nevada and Arizona state historic preservation officers to mitigate impacts to cultural resources. Consultation will continue with the American Indian tribes throughout the implementation of the development concept plans to ensure that any potential concerns are addressed.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.), requires federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. Consultation letters were sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in September 2008.

A programmatic biological opinion issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in February 2010 included an evaluation of potential effects on the threatened Mohave desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and its designated critical habitat from programmatic activities in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Clark County, Nevada. Programmatic activities addressed in that document included infrastructure development and maintenance as part of the implementation of a development concept plan for Cottonwood Cove. The programmatic biological opinion is in effect for a 10-year period. The general terms and conditions that are included in that document will be implemented as part of the proposed actions to minimize the effects and incidental take of desert tortoise. Additional project-specific terms and conditions may be identified based on the specifics of any individual project and will be determined during project-level consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Specific projects associated with the implementation of the development concept plan for Cottonwood Cove are to be appended to the programmatic biological opinion.

Arizona and Nevada State Natural Resources Agencies

The National Park Service sent letters to the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Nevada State Department of Wildlife to gather species information and additional concerns regarding the planning

process. The Arizona Game and Fish Department provided input that they wished to be actively involved as a stakeholder and cooperating agency in the conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process for the development concept plans. They also wanted to be kept informed about the planning process.

The Nevada State Department of Wildlife provided written input and participated in one of the public meetings. They also indicated that the state was interested in ensuring accessibility and security of their vessels and equipment, avoiding impacts on aquatic habitats essential to the razorback sucker, and increasing available areas for shoreline angling access by no boat users.

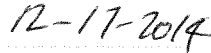
CONCLUSION

The Selected Action (Alternative 3) provides the most comprehensive, long-term, effective strategy among all the alternatives considered in the *Cottonwood Cove and Katherine Landing Development Concept Plans/FEIS* for meeting the project's purpose, objectives, and the management direction established in the 1986 GMP and 2003 LMP. The Selected Action also is fully compliant with National Park Service's mission and policies and other pertinent laws and regulations. The Selected Action allows the NPS to balance protection of the park's natural and cultural resources while providing a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

APPROVED:



Christine S. Lehnertz, Regional Director
Pacific West Region, National Park Service



Date