

**Decision Memorandum on Action and for Application of:**

**Categorical Exclusion for Hazardous Fuels Reduction Activities (43 CFR 46.210(k))**

**Lehman Caves Visitors Center Area Fuel Management**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Great Basin National Park  
White Pine County, NV

**Purpose of and Need for Action**

This project will reduce hazardous fuels within Great Basin National Park's Mission 66 era Lehman Caves Visitors Center (LCVC) and day-use picnic areas. Current tree densities and proximity of trees to houses and other structures within the project area do not provide adequate defensible space in the event of a fire. Project goals are to increase defensible space and reduce the risk of structural damage or loss in the event of a fire. Tree cover and density will be reduced by tree removal (thinning) and limbing of target species including pinyon pine, juniper, and mountain mahogany. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is confined to 22 acres around the visitor center, park entrance road, historic orchard, and day-use picnic area. Park staff along with prescribed fire specialists from Lake Mead National Recreation Area designed project goals and prescription types after surveys and input from cultural resources staff to avoid causing direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impacts to adjacent NHPA resources. No direct, indirect, and/or cumulative effects will occur to adjacent NHPA resources during project implementation or after the undertaking is complete.

The following prescriptions will be used to maintain defensible space within the project area.

- Only pinyon and juniper will be cut. All deciduous trees will be left.
- Slash and cut material will be chipped or made available as firewood.
- Remove all conifers within 10 ft of structures.
- Remove all conifers within 20 ft of propane tanks and electrical boxes.
- Remove all conifers within 50 feet of roads as the project boundary allows.
- Remove trees within 10 feet of the amphitheater circle.
- Lop and scatter conifer seedlings (< 4 ft high) in previously thinned areas and in the northern sections of the project area further from the road and picnic area.
- In higher density stands along the park entrance road and behind the picnic area, reduce conifer cover by 25%.

Cut material and slash will be removed by a combination of mechanical chipping and firewood disposal to park residents and/or the local community. No prescribed fire or pile burning will occur within the project area. NPS fuels or fire crews will conduct treatments.

## **Plan Conformance**

The Proposed Action is consistent with the General Management Plan and Fire Management Plan. The Proposed Action was designed in conformance with all bureau standards and incorporates appropriate guidelines for specific required and desired conditions relevant to project activities.

## **Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 43 CFR 46.210 (I) because the project area is less than 1,000 acres and falls entirely within the wildland-urban interface.

The application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. None of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 43 CFR 46.215 apply to the Proposed Action.

There were no pertinent situations that arose during the design of activities and no potential for significant effects to natural or cultural resources or public health and safety.

## **Persons and Agencies Consulted**

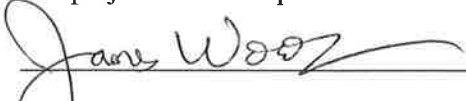
An interdisciplinary team was consulted during the development of the proposed action. No further steps were taken based on the findings and suggestions from this team. The project will be made public through the PEPC website for 10 days.

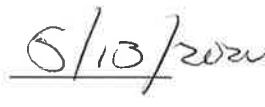
## **Decision and Rationale**

I have decided to implement a fuels reduction project surrounding the Lehman Caves Visitors Center and day-use picnic area within Great Basin National Park. Tree removal (chainsaw thinning) will occur adjacent to structures within the 22-acre project area to increase defensible space and reduce the risk of structural damage or loss in the event of a fire. Park staff designed the undertaking to avoid causing direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impacts to adjacent NHPA resources. No direct, indirect, and/or cumulative effects will occur to adjacent NHPA resources during project implementation or after the undertaking is complete. A map of the project area is available from the project lead and on the PEPC website ([pepc.nps.gov](http://pepc.nps.gov)). These actions meet the need for action. In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis or documentation is required.

## **Implementation Date**

This project will be implemented on or after May 1, 2020.

  
James Woolsey, Superintendent

  
Date