

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST
FOREST SUPERVISOR'S ORDER NO. 01-08-05

CIVIL RIGHTS IMPACT ANALYSIS

I. PROPOSED ACTION

Provide for the safety for general Forest users in and around the Southern California Edison (SCE) Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project, during construction, by implementing a temporary closure for all general Forest uses on two National Forest roads, which are also designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes, and are located within the project area on the Santa Clara-Mojave Rivers Ranger District of the Angeles National Forest. The two National Forest System Roads temporarily closed by this action are: 6N09 (Spunky Edison Road), and 6N04 (Leona Divide Road).

II. DURATION

Beginning December 22, 2008 to December 21, 2009.

III. DATA GATHERING AND STUDIES

Project Area

In the Antelope Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a mitigation measure was developed to close OHV trails that would be impacted from the construction activities. The purpose for this closure was for health and safety concerns for OHV users in the area. Many of the designated OHV routes in the project area will be used as access for heavy equipment during construction of the 500-kV transmission line and demolition of the 66-kV transmission line. There was a potential SCE would upgrade these roads above their designated Forest Service Maintenance Level 2. With the use of heavy equipment, the potential for higher maintenance of these routes, and the ability of children driving green-sticker vehicles on these routes, the EIS recommended implementing the OHV closure during construction and the Record of Decision approved it.

After reviewing Southern California Edison's detailed design for constructing the 500-kV line and demolishing and removing the 66-kV line, it became apparent health and safety concerns would be valid for all general forest users on these roads/routes. Construction activities in the area will include various sized helicopters, large equipment (e.g., cranes, dozers, semi-sized trucks), and equipment being flown over the project area and across roads. Helicopters will be flying to and from tower construction sites up to three miles away. These activities would conflict with recreation use and general traffic use in the area and cause health and safety concerns for the public. In addition, Spunky-Edison Road and Leona Divide Road are narrow twisting roads which will be receiving heavy equipment traffic. These roads have very few turnouts in the project area

making two-way traffic difficult and unsafe. To minimize public health and safety concerns along these roads, the roads will be closed during construction. The closure will be re-evaluated when restoration activities occur to ensure there is still a need for these closures.

Other roads and OHV routes in the project area present similar safety conflicts, but are not included in this temporary order because they are already within a closure area resulting from the 2007 Buckweed Fire.

Some of the closures occur outside the project area. The purpose of extending the closure area is to ensure there are logical locations to divert OHV users away from the construction area.

Human Resources

1. Characteristics of the uses of the Angeles National Forest

The Forest is located adjacent to the Los Angeles metropolitan area and is within a two-hour drive for more than ten million people. The Forest comprises more than one-quarter of the land area available for outdoor recreation in Los Angeles County. Annual use of the Forest exceeds 5 million visits per year.

The largest single use of the Forest is characterized as day use. That is persons entering the Forest for a recreation visit that does not include an overnight stay.

Recreation activity groups include; anglers, boaters, equestrians, hikers, off-highway vehicle users, picnickers, sightseers, water players and persons participating in special events.

The Forest is a year-round destination, with winter snow crowds rivaling peak summer use.

2. Work Environment/Characteristics

The proposed action would have no effect on the size, number or characteristics of the existing or potential workforce.

3. Attitudes, beliefs and values

The effect of the proposed action on Forest users will cause changes in traditional behavior patterns of persons who use the proposed closure area. Many of the users view the Forest as an extension of their backyard and Forest rules and regulations do not pertain to their use of the Forest. The public education and public contact associated with this Closure will provide an opportunity to share the Forest Service mission of multiple use and how the National Energy Policy/Act affects National Forest System lands.

4. Social Organization

The proposed action will have no effect on community cohesion or stability.

IV. MITIGATION

Use Restrictions will be posted at the Supervisor's Office, the San Gabriel River Ranger District Office, the Los Angeles River Ranger District, and the Santa Clara/Mojave River Ranger District in addition to selected field locations where the closure will occur. SCE, with assistance from the Forest, will develop fliers providing other options for recreation use near-by.

Visitors whose values and traditions involve the use of National Forest lands will be directed by Forest Service personnel to areas where those activities are authorized. The Forest will re-evaluated throughout the construction and restoration process and if it is determined the risk to health and safety of forest users is diminished to a level that would allow general forest uses, the Order will be lifted.

V. ALTERNATIVES

Only two alternatives are addressed in this CRIA. They are:

1. No Action
2. Proposed Action, Implement temporary closure of the noted roads/trails.

VI. IMPACT ANALYSIS

No Action Alternative

1. Increased risk of health and safety to general forest users in this area.
2. No additional loss of recreation opportunities in the area.
3. Potential conflicts with construction activities and general recreation use in the area.
4. No expected impacts to natural resources in the area.

Proposed Action Alternative

1. Reduces the risk of health and safety to general forest users while SCE is constructing the new 500-kV line and demolishing and removing the 66-kV line
2. Reduction in the loss of recreation opportunities.
3. No potential conflicts with construction activities and general recreation use in the area.
4. No expected impacts to natural resources in the area

VII. DECISION

It is my decision that implementation of the proposed action will not violate the civil rights of individuals or of user groups who utilize the Angeles National Forest.

My decision is based on the following:

1. The proposed action is consistent with Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations Sub-part B, Sections 261.50(e) which allows Forest Supervisors to exempt specified persons from prohibitions contained in an Order.
2. The proposed action will reduce the health and safety risk to Forest users in this area during construction activities.
3. The proposed action will have equal impact on all visitors and recreationists utilizing the Project Area.

For the reasons listed above, adverse impacts to all users of the Forest are estimated to be minimal.

Dated this 19th day of December, 2008

/s/ Marty Dumpis (for)

JODY NOIRON
Forest Supervisor, Angeles National Forest