

DECISION MEMO

AREA CLOSURE ORDER – 01-08-05 ANTELOPE-PARDEE 500-KV TRANSMISSION PROJECT AREA

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE – FOREST SERVICE ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST SANTA CLARA-MOJAVE RIVERS RANGER DISTRICT LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

DECISION

It is my decision to issue a Forest Order authorizing a temporary closure for all Forest users of Forest System roads 6N09 (Spunky Edison Road) and 6N04 (Leona Divide Road) on the Santa Clara-Mojave Rivers Ranger District on the Angeles National Forest. The roads which will be closed are also designated OHV routes that were open to all forms of motorized travel. The closure addresses public health and safety concerns in the project area related to the construction of Southern California Edison's (SCE) 500-kV transmission line. The complexity of the construction activities has demonstrated the need for this temporary closure.

This temporary closure will be effective from December 22, 2008 through December 21, 2009. The Forest System roads affected are shown on the attached map.

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

In the Antelope-Pardee 500-kV Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement, a mitigation measure was proposed, and approved through the Record of Decision, to close OHV designated roads within the project area from OHV traffic. This was due to the amount of heavy equipment that would occur on the roads/OHV routes, the potential for OHV route upgrades beyond Forest Service Maintenance Level 2, and the OHV designation that allows children, on green sticker vehicles, to ride on these routes.

After reviewing Southern California Edison's detailed design for constructing the 500-kV line and demolishing the 66-kV line, it became apparent that health and safety concerns would be true for all 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 construction tower sites up to three miles away. These activities would conflict with recreation use/traffic in the area and present possible safety concerns for the public. Both forest roads are narrow twisting roads which will be receiving heavy equipment traffic. These roads have very few turnouts making two-way traffic difficult and unsafe.

To minimize public safety concerns along these roads/OHV routes, they 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.

REASON FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

This decision is categorically excluded from documentation pursuant to Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 31.12(1) – *Orders issued pursuant to 36 CFR Part 261 – Prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety.*

As a result of the analysis documented above, I find there are no extraordinary circumstances that might cause the action to have significant environmental effects; therefore, the proposed action is excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment.

