



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mojave National Preserve
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Mojave National Preserve News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – AUGUST 20, 2015

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Preserve Seeks Comments on Environmental Assessment for Restoration of West Pond in Mojave National Preserve

The National Park Service (NPS) has completed an environmental assessment (EA) for the *Restoration of West Pond as Wetlands Habitat in Mojave National Preserve, San Bernardino County, California*. The purpose of this environmental assessment (EA) is to analyze the consequences of taking no action compared with two options to improve water quality in West Pond. This document analyzes both action alternatives with a longer-term objective for West Pond to sustain populations of Mohave tui chub (*Siphateles bicolor mohavensis*) and Western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*). Both species have declined due to lack of available native habitat. The Mohave tui chub is an endangered desert fish protected under the Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act; the Western pond turtle is a California Species of Special Concern that is being considered for listing the Endangered Species Act.

The EA examines a No Action alternative, which would maintain the current conditions at Soda Springs, with the water in West Pond remaining a highly concentrated brine due to high rates of evaporation and insufficient water flow into the pond. Both action alternatives would reverse the gradient of West Pond, allowing fresh water to be pumped in from a nearby well. Under Alternative C, an overflow drain would also be installed to intermittently remove higher concentrations of salts.

The Preserve welcomes your comments on the project and EA. The EA is available online at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/westpond_ea, and at Mojave National Preserve's three visitor centers. Copies of the EA are also available upon request; contact Danette Woo at danette_woo@nps.gov or (760) 252-6107 for more information.

Comments on the project will be accepted from August 20 through September 19, 2015. They may be submitted online (http://parkplanning.nps.gov/westpond_ea) or mailed in. All comments must be received no later than September 22, 2015. They can be directed to:

Superintendent
Mojave National Preserve
ATTENTION: West Pond EA Comments
2701 Barstow Road
Barstow, California 92311

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