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In Reply Refer To:
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September 15, 2009

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon, Arizona

From: Field Supervisor

Subject: Fifth Addendum to the Biological Opinion for Prescribed Fire in Grand Canyon National Park

Thank you for your August 11, 2009, email message regarding the subject biological opinion that was issued on August 22, 2003. The project timeline for the April 9, 2003, Batch Biological Evaluation for Prescribed Fire in Grand Canyon National Park (GRCA), covered by the 2003 biological opinion, is 2003 through 2008. The August 11 email requested an amendment to the 2003 biological opinion in order to treat two units in 2009 that were not included in the original list of projects. Previous addenda to the 2003 biological opinion were issued on July 8, 2005, August 18, 2006, August 7, 2008, and April 30, 2009.

The two units are the Hearst and Buggeln units on the South Rim of GRCA. Prescribed fire will occur on a total of 1,258 acres of the ponderosa pine and pinyon-juniper cover types. The burn units are not within Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) (MSO) habitat but are as close as 0.25 mile to the nearest MSO protected activity center (PAC). At least three PACs could be in the path of smoke carried by prevailing winds from the two units. California condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*) could occur in or near the project area. The units do not include sentry milk vetch (*Astragalus cremnophylax* var. *cremnophylax*), but are very close to populations of and habitat for the species.

The August 11 email indicated that the PACs and sentry milk vetch are separated from the planned prescribed fire activities by Highway 64. It also indicated that all of the conservation measures, reasonable and prudent measures, terms and conditions, and conservation recommendations for all species of the 2003 biological opinion will be implemented for the three units. In addition, all other aspects of the prescribed fire program remain as described in the 2003 biological evaluation and 2003 biological opinion.

Furthermore, in a September 4, 2009, email, your staff confirmed that:

- All of the fire activities for the two units will be conducted outside of the MSO breeding season.

- Fire of the two burns will not cross Highway 64.
- Fire will not enter the PAC or go over the rim of the canyon.
- Prior to ignition, the northern fire perimeter along Highway 64 will be treated to reduce fire activity at the road. Holding resources will be stationed on the road to patrol for and suppress any spot fires that may cross the road.
- Fire will not enter any suitable sentry milk vetch habitat.

In order to determine whether the prescribed fire program has been within the scope of the biological evaluation and 2003 biological opinion for the August 7, 2008 addendum, we reviewed annual fire reports that GRCA prepared under requirements of the biological opinion. For the most part, the reasonable and prudent measures and terms and conditions of the biological opinion were implemented through 2007. We have not yet received annual prescribed fire reports for 2008 or 2009.

Due to the commitments listed above, no new effects to listed species are anticipated from the treatments. Treatment of the two units will implement all conditions of the 2003 biological opinion. Therefore, the 2003 biological opinion is amended to include treatment of the Hearst and Buggeln units in 2009.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Bill Austin (928) 226-0614 (x102) or Brenda Smith (x101).

/s/ by Brenda Smith

Steven L. Spangle

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