

DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL

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Acton, CA 93510

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eac@deserttortoise.org

Via email only

24 March 2024

Colleen Cepero-Rios
Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130
cceperorios@blm.gov

Attn: JJ Smith, Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89130.
BLM_NV_SNDO_NEPA_Comments@blm.gov

RE: Muddy River Floodplain Restoration - Scoping Comments (DOI-BLM-NV-S010-2024-0040-EA)

Dear Ms. Cepero-Rios and Mr. Smith,

The Desert Tortoise Council (Council) is a non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of professionals and laypersons who share a common concern for wild desert tortoises and a commitment to advancing the public's understanding of desert tortoise species. Established in 1975 to promote conservation of tortoises in the deserts of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, the Council routinely provides information and other forms of assistance to individuals, organizations, and regulatory agencies on matters potentially affecting desert tortoises within their geographic ranges.

Both our physical and email addresses are provided above in our letterhead for your use when providing future correspondence to us. When given a choice, we prefer to receive emails for future correspondence, as mail delivered via the U.S. Postal Service may take several days to be delivered. Email is an "environmentally friendlier way" of receiving correspondence and documents rather than "snail mail."

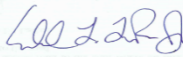
On March 20, 2024, I emailed Ms. Ciperio-Rios and stated that “given BLM's description of the project on the eplanning website, it appears that riparian habitats and several endangered bird species may be affected by the activity. Given this limited information, it would appear that BLM does not anticipate any impacts to the desert tortoise. If BLM thinks that the project May Affect the desert tortoise, we would like to provide comments.”

In response to this email, Ms. Ciperio-Rios responded on March 21, 2024 via email and mentioned that the “BLM is currently in the scoping period gathering information, identifying issues and resource concerns from the public, stakeholders, and other government entities. Due to this, we are still considering all potential impacts. Since the proposed project is within riparian habitat, we do not expect this project to impact desert tortoise.”

Based on this information, the Council will not be providing comments at this time. However, we request that BLM consider the Council an affected interest. In addition, we request that BLM notify us when the National Environmental Policy Act document, which we assume would be an environmental assessment, for this proposed project is available for public comment. The Council would like to review it and provide comments if any part of the project may directly, indirectly, or cumulatively impact the tortoise/tortoise habitat.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding these requests. Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Respectfully,



Edward L. LaRue, Jr., M.S.
Desert Tortoise Council, Ecosystems Advisory Committee, Chairperson