



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Environmental Assessment

Forest
Service

RELOCATION OF THE TEXAS CANYON FIRE STATION

July 1, 2008



**Santa Clara/ Mojave Rivers Ranger District, Angeles National Forest
Los Angeles County, California**

T5N; R15W Section 21

For Information Contact:

George Farra, Assistant Forest Engineer, Angeles National Forest
701 N. Santa Anita Ave, Arcadia, CA 91006
626-574-5301
gfarra@fs.fed.us

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Table of Contents

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
Purpose and Need for Action	2
Proposed Action	3
Decision Framework	3
Public Involvement	3
Issues	4
Alternatives, including the Proposed Action	5
Alternatives	5
Alternative 1	5
Alternative 2	6
Comparison of Alternatives	7
Environmental Consequences	8
1. Impact to Forest Service employees.	8
2. Impact on accessibility for disabled persons.	8
3. Impact on “Greening” of the Forest Service.	8
4. Impact to first response services.	9
5. Impact to natural resources.	9
6. Impact to cultural/ heritage resources.	10
MITIGATION MEASURES	11
Consultation and Coordination	12
Appendices	13
Air Quality.	14

SUMMARY

The Angeles National Forest proposes to relocate and construct the Texas Canyon Fire Station at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California. This action is needed because the existing station at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California, has conflicts with cultural and physical resources.

In addition to the proposed action, the Forest Service also evaluated the No-Action alternative, under which the fire station will indefinitely remain at its current address.

INTRODUCTION

The Forest Service has prepared this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Environmental Assessment discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives. The document is organized into four parts:

Introduction: The section includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency's proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal and how the public responded.

Comparison of Alternatives, including the Proposed Action: This section provides a more detailed description of the agency's proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on significant issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes possible mitigation measures. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.

Environmental Consequences: This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and other alternatives. This analysis is organized by significant issues. Within each section, the affected environment is described first, followed by the effects of the No Action Alternative that provides a baseline for evaluation and comparison of the other alternatives that follow.

Agencies and Persons Consulted: This section provides a list of preparers and agencies consulted during the development of the environmental assessment.

Appendices: The appendices provide more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the environmental assessment.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the Santa Clara/ Mojave Rivers Ranger District Office in 28245 Avenue Crocker, Suite 220, Valencia, CA 91355.

Background

The Texas Canyon Hotshot and Fire Station including a 4 bay engine garage with offices, one 20 person barracks, 2 residences and one trailer pad are currently located at the

bottom of Bouquet Canyon, across the road from Bouquet creek. The buildings are located on a very small site (approximately 2.5 acres) bounded by a vertical slope and Bouquet Canyon Road. The road is directly adjacent to Bouquet Creek which restricts available development space on the site due to code required separations from surface water. The buildings at the station are in dire need of repairs, upgrades, and expansion; however, such construction would interfere and damage known cultural resources at the site. Further, Bouquet creek occasionally floods and erodes the road during periods of heavy rains, restricting access to the station. Altering the stream channel to prevent flooding is difficult because the stream is habitat to a federally listed fish species.

The Santa Clara/ Mojave Rivers Ranger District Office located at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California burned during the 2007 Buckweed Fire. A temporary district office was set up at 28245 Avenue Crocker, Suite 220, Valencia, CA 91355, while the District plans a permanent relocation to a new site in Acton, California. The burned site in Saugus consists of a leveled site 5.8 acres in size, approximately 20 feet higher than the stream level; the site is underlain with man-made fill placed and compacted for the purpose of creating the pad in the 1980s, and as such has no cultural resource issues associated with it.

The current proposal is to relocate the Texas Canyon fire station from its current site at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road to 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road. The proposed site is approximately 0.7 mile southwest of the current site.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this initiative is

1. Protect resources for cultural and scientific value and public benefit.
2. Protect water quality in Bouquet Creek
3. Reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance.
4. Provide a station compliant with current health, safety and accessibility requirements.
5. Continue providing first response services at strategic locations in the Forest.

This action is needed to complete the implementation of the 1997 district re-organization process and the Fire Facility Master Plan approved in March 2007. This action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Angeles Forest Plan, and helps move the project area towards desired conditions described in that plan.

Protecting resources for cultural and scientific value and public benefit responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan, Part 2 – Forest Strategy, Page 110 – Her 1 - “heritage Resource Protection.”

Reducing the deferred maintenance backlog, and providing a station compliant with current health, safety and accessibility requirements responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan, Part 2 – Forest Strategy, Page 117 – Fac 1 - Facility Maintenance Backlog: “... Reduce the backlog with priority for health and safety and accessibility compliance ... Construct new buildings to conform to approved facilities master plans.”

Providing strategic first response services addresses the goals and objectives outlined in the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan, Part 2 – Page 128 – Fire 3 – Fire Suppression Emphasis: “... Continue the evaluation of current and future fire station locations with respect to strategic location.”

Proposed Action

The action proposed by the Forest Service to meet the purpose and needs of the project, is to relocate the Hotshot/ Fire station and barracks approximately 0.7 mile from its current location at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road to a new location at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, in Santa Clara, California; and to construct at that new location, three 9 person barracks (2177 square feet each), one two bay tandem fire garage and office structure (4704 square feet and one 4 bay garage and office (1500 square feet). The work will also include installation of site utilities (electrical, propane gas, water and septic) in 3554 linear feet of trenching, installation of a 40,000 gallon buried fiberglass potable water tank, 37,000 square feet of pavement overlay, and installation of 48,500 square feet of new asphalt, concrete sidewalks, site lighting and native species landscaping. The project is estimated to begin in fall 2008 and be completed within one calendar year. The proposed action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts, and is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions. The effects of the proposed action are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial.

Decision Framework

Given the purpose and need, the deciding official reviews the proposed action and the other alternatives in order to make the following decisions:

Should the Texas Canyon Hotshot/ Fire station and barracks be relocated 0.7 mile from 31250 to 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, and re-constructed at that new location.

Public Involvement

The proposal was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on March 10, 2008. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping, April 22 to June 1, 2008. As part of the public involvement process, the agency also mailed out a scoping letter seeking input on this project, to those in the Forest master mailing list who had expressed a desire to be notified of all actions on the Angeles National Forest (165 recipients), and 55 public or private entities on our mailing list with addresses in Saugus or Santa Clarita. The agency also e-mailed the scoping letter to all employees of the Santa Clara/ Mojave Rivers Ranger District, and posted the letter on the Angeles National Forest website.

Three comments were received: one in support of the proposed project, one having no comments at this time but requesting a copy of the draft environmental assessment, and one raising the following issues:

1. Use the current Texas Canyon station buildings as recreation center or visitor information, instead of tearing it down.

2. Why built on a site that will probably burn again.
3. The Forest Service is giving less and less service to the public.

Using the comment from the public and other agencies (see *Issues* section), the interdisciplinary team developed a list of issues to address.

Issues

The Forest Service separates the issues into two groups: significant and non-significant issues. Significant issues are defined as those directly or indirectly caused by implementing the proposed action. Non-significant issues are identified as those: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations require this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)..." The three issues raised by the Public can all be considered non-significant: Use buildings for recreation instead of tearing it down (outside the scope of the proposed action); site will burn again (conjectural); Forest Service is giving less and less service to the public (irrelevant to the decision to be made).

As for significant issues, the Forest Service identified seven topics raised during internal scoping. These issues include:

1. Impact to Forest Service employees. The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: travel distance and time from existing or previous District Office.
2. Impact on accessibility for disabled persons: The indicator used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures is: compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
3. Impact on "Greening" and "carbon footprint reduction" of the Forest Service: The indicator used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: energy consumption, volume of surface runoff, and water consumption at the site.
4. Impact to first response services as a result of the relocation of the fire station. The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: (i) the number of fire starts, based on statistical data over the last decade, that can be reached within a 15 minute response time; (ii) the number of fire starts, based on statistical data over the last decade, that can be reached within a 15 minute response time, and which cannot be reached by other Forest Service engines within the 15 minute response time.
5. Impact to natural resources, including threatened and endangered species. The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: 1) impacts to federally threatened or endangered species are avoided and 2) impacts to Forest Service sensitive species will not lead to a trend towards loss of viability or federal listing.

6. Impact to cultural/ heritage resources: The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: presence of cultural/ heritage resources on site.

7. Air Quality: The project resides in the South Coast Air Pollution District. The maximum annual emissions (tons/year) estimated for this project are below the de minimis levels. The Air quality issue will therefore not be analyzed further in this document. However, mitigation measure to reduce air pollution and noise as a result of this project are provided in the mitigation section. See Appendix for additional discussion on Air Quality.

ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

Alternatives

Alternative 1

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Hotshot/ fire station and barracks will indefinitely remain at their current location at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California.

The site includes the following buildings:

Building Name	Category	Square Footage	Year Constructed
Texas Cyn Booster/ Pumphouse	Industrial	69	1960
Texas Cyn Barracks	Barrack	2621	1966
Texas Cyn Chlorinator	Industrial	86	1995
Texas Cyn Garage/Office	Storage	1825	1982
Texas Cyn Gas House	Storage	96	1968
Texas Cyn Messhall	Other	1660	1968
Texas Cyn Residence	Family Housing	1868	1966
Texas Cyn. Residence	Family Housing	1771	1960

These buildings require extensive maintenance and upgrades to bring them into compliance with acceptable Forest Service building standards, and to make them accessible for disabled persons. However, such construction is restricted by the presence of physical and cultural resources as follows.

The site contains both non-renewable historic and prehistoric archaeological sites that reflect past land uses. Cultural resource surveys have resulted in the identification of two sites within the boundaries of the existing facility. The sites have not been formally evaluated, and therefore must be treated as if they are eligible for inclusion in the

National Register of Historic Places for all undertakings in the vicinity. These special concerns are reflective of the sensitive nature of the resources, and have continually complicated facility management and maintenance projects.

Continual use of the existing facility will require ongoing regime of management measures that are necessary for the protection of cultural resources. In particular, consultation with the Forest Heritage Program Manager must occur for each separate undertaking to provide for protection measures for the known sites, and ensure no effects occur to cultural resources at the vicinity. The ongoing management of the resources in the parcel may become more complicated by such things as emergency situations, inadvertent activities, or personnel changes, which may exacerbate the possibility of noncompliance with the Programmatic Agreement the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region and the State Historic Preservation Officer, and lead to adverse effects to cultural resources.

Physically, the site is located across the street from, and at almost the same elevation as the Bouquet Canyon stream. During periods of heavy rains, the stream overflows over the road and into the site, flooding the area, causing flood damage, erosion, and undermining, and restricting site ingress and egress, and flooding the site septic tank area.

The existing Texas Canyon water system was constructed in the late 1950's through the mid 1960's. Significant modifications or improvements to the system have been made over the years. The majority of the system, nonetheless, is still the original. The system consists of a vertical water well, a pumphouse, a 12,000 gallon concrete tank, and approximately 1,800 feet of water lines (a mixture of cast iron pipe, galvanized iron pipe, and asbestos cement pipe). Water is pumped up to the storage tank, which gravity feeds the facilities. The main issue with the Texas Canyon water system is the high iron and manganese content of the water pumped from the well. This causes an orange coloration of the water, which is not a health concern, but which is an aesthetic problem causing staining of fixtures as well as odor and taste problems.

Alternative 2

The Proposed Action

The Texas Canyon Hotshot/ Fire Station and barracks would be relocated and constructed at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, in Santa Clara, California, which is at a distance of approximately 0.7 mile from its current location.

The proposed location is on land owned by the Forest Service, inside the boundaries of the Angeles National Forest. The burned site in Saugus consists of a large relatively level pad approximately 20 feet higher than the stream level; the site is underlain with man-made fill placed and compacted for the purpose of creating the pad in the 1980s.

The proposed development will include a 4,700± square foot fire station with 4-bay garage and offices, three 2,200± square foot barracks, additional minor structures, and related driveways, parking, fencing, walkways, and landscaping.

The buildings and site will comply with the Forest Service architectural guidelines. Construction is expected to start in Fall 2008, with a completion date in Summer 2009.

Landscaping around the buildings will consist of native drought resistant plants.

No cultural resources have been identified at this site.

The proposed Saugus water system will include an existing well and pumphouse. A new 2" PVC pipe will connect to an existing valve near the old gas house and climb up the hill to the northeast approximately 650 feet in distance, with 150 feet in elevation gain, to a new 40,000 gallon underground fiberglass tank. A new 6" PVC pipe will run from the tank down the hill in the same trench as the pump line to supply the new facilities. From the area near the existing pump line connection, the new 6" pipe will branch in three directions to feed the new facilities. One line will run to the north and west to a new fire hydrant near the two western barracks and branch off from there to feed each barracks with a 2" PVC line. Another 2" line will run to the east to feed the third barracks. Another 6" line will run to the south, branching into a 1" line to the fire station while the 6" line continues south to a fire hydrant near the entrance gate, and then reduces to a 1" line to feed a future warehouse location at the south end.

Comparison of Alternatives

This section provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives.

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
1. Impact to Forest Service employees	Low	Low
2. Impact on accessibility for disabled persons	High	Low
3. Impact on “Greening” of the Forest Service	Low	Low
4. Impact to first response services	Low	Low
5. Impact to Natural resources, including TES	Moderate	Low
6. Impact to cultural/heritage resources	Moderate	Low

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section summarizes the physical, biological, social and economic environments of the affected project area and the potential changes to those environments due to implementation of the alternatives. It also presents the scientific and analytical basis for comparison of alternatives presented in the chart above.

1. Impact to Forest Service employees.

The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures is travel distance and time from existing or previous District Office.

Alternative 1: No Action: The Hotshot/ fire station and barracks will indefinitely remain at their current location at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California. There will be no change in the travel distance and time incurred by employees.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action: The Texas Canyon Hotshot/ Fire Station and barracks will be relocated and constructed at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, in Santa Clara, California. Since the new location is at a distance of approximately 0.7 mile from its current location, there will be negligible (approximately 2 to 3 minutes) change in employees' travel time.

2. Impact on accessibility for disabled persons.

The indicator used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures is: compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Alternative 1: No Action: The Hotshot/ fire station and barracks will indefinitely remain at their current location at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California. The existing buildings do not meet ADA and Rehabilitation Act requirements or additional Forest Service standards for accessibility. Construction constraints due to cultural resources onsite makes it difficult to upgrade these buildings to make them compliant with accessibility requirements and guidelines.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action: The Texas Canyon Hotshot/ Fire Station and barracks will be relocated and constructed at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, in Santa Clara, California. The proposed buildings will meet ADA and Rehabilitation Act requirements and all Forest Service accessibility guidelines.

3. Impact on "Greening" of the Forest Service.

The indicator used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: energy consumption; volume of surface runoff and water consumption at the site.

Alternative 1: No Action: The Hotshot/ fire station and barracks will indefinitely remain at their current location at 31250 Bouquet Canyon Road, Santa Clara, California. The buildings are not energy efficient, with poor insulation and high energy consuming lights and appliances. Landscaping consists of non-native vegetation.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action: The Texas Canyon Hotshot/ Fire Station and barracks will be relocated and constructed at 30800 Bouquet Canyon Road, in Santa Clara, California. The buildings will have the most efficient electric lights, switches, outlets, and appliances. Landscaping will consist of native vegetation with a low flow irrigation system. Site surface and drainage will maximize percolation and minimize runoff.

4. Impact to first response services.

Impact to first response services as a result of the relocation of the fire station: The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: (i) the number of fire starts, based on statistical data over the last decade, that can be reached within a 15 minute response time; (ii) the number of fire starts, based on statistical data over the last decade, that can be reached within a 15 minute response time, and which cannot be reached by other Forest Service engines within the 15 minute response time.

Alternative 1: No Action: The Fire Station remains at its current location. A Forest fire analysis performed in 2007 reviewed all the wildland fires that occurred in the Angeles National Forests or its vicinities, and calculated the number of these fires that each Forest Service firestation could reach within a 15 minute response time. Based on this analysis, it is estimated that the fire station at its current location would have provided first response to approximately 80 fires, and approximately 65% of these fires could only be reached by this station within the 15 minute response time. Also based on this analysis, a fire station at the proposed location would have provided first response to approximately 100 fires, and approximately 65% of these could only be reached by that station within the 15 minute response time. Thus, by keeping the fire station at its current location, instead of relocating it to the proposed site would meet the indicator measure approximately 10 to 20 percent fewer times than if the Fire Station was relocated to its proposed location.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action: The Fire Station is relocated to its proposed location. A Forest fire analysis performed in 2007 reviewed all the wildland fires that occurred in the Angeles National Forests or its vicinities, and calculated the number of these fires that each Forest Service firestation could reach within a 15 minute response time. Based on this analysis, it is estimated that the fire station at its current location would have provided first response to approximately 80 fires, and approximately 65% of these fires could only be reached by this station within the 15 minute response time. Also based on this analysis, a fire station at the proposed location would have provided first response to approximately 100 fires, and approximately 65% of these could only be reached by that station within the 15 minute response time. Thus, by relocating the fire station to its proposed location would meet the indicator measure approximately 10 to 20 percent more times than if the Fire Station remained at its current location.

5. Impact to natural resources.

Impact to natural resources, including threatened, endangered and Forest Service species. The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: 1) impacts to federally threatened or endangered species are avoided and 2) impacts to Forest Service sensitive species will not lead to a trend towards loss of viability or federal listing.

Alternative 1: No Action: The Fire Station remains at its current location. The continued occupancy of the current Texas Canyon Station will allow for existing conditions to persist. Impacts associated with day-to-day operation of the station and personal and work vehicle use of the Bouquet Canyon Road will continue. Work needed to maintain or upgrade facilities will have to be implemented as needed. No impacts to the unarmored threespine stickleback or any other federally listed species are anticipated. Because this station is located in closer proximity to the creek and includes more vegetation within its boundary, it is more likely to provide habitat for Forest Service sensitive species such as the San Diego horned lizard, California legless lizard and coastal rosy boa. Impacts to individuals may occur, but activities are not expected to lead to a trend towards loss of viability or federal listing.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action: The Fire Station is relocated to its proposed location. The new project location is situated more on an upland terrace than the current Fire Station. The 5.8 acres are characterized by asphalt, structures and high levels of disturbance. Construction and occupancy of the new Fire Station and associated structures/features will result in ground disturbance, noise and vibration. Construction impacts will be temporary. Level of impacts associated with ongoing vehicle use and daily activities are not expected to change from current conditions. Implementation of BMPs and other mitigation measures will ensure that no impacts to the unarmored threespine stickleback or any other federally listed species occur. Impacts to Forest Service sensitive species individuals may occur, but activities are not expected to lead to a trend towards loss of viability or federal listing.

6. Impact to cultural/ heritage resources.

Cultural resources consist of archaeological resources, architectural resources (buildings and structures), and properties of importance to Native Americans and other ethnic groups. Per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Federal agencies must take into account project impacts on historic properties. Prior to any new project implementation, project managers coordinate with the Angeles National Forest Heritage Program Manager to facilitate compliance with the Regional Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding Section 106.

The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: presence of cultural/ heritage resources on site.

Alternative 1: No Action: The Fire Station remains at its current location. At the Texas Canyon location, the project area contains both non-renewable historic and prehistoric archaeological sites that reflect past land uses. Cultural resource surveys have resulted in the identification of two sites within the boundaries of the existing facility. The sites have not been formally evaluated, and therefore must be treated as if they are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places for all undertakings in the vicinity. These special concerns are reflective of the sensitive nature of the resources, and have continually complicated facility management and maintenance projects.

Continual use of the existing facility will require ongoing regime of management measures that are necessary for the protection of cultural resources. In particular, consultation with the Forest Heritage Program Manager must occur for each separate

undertaking to provide for protection measures for the known sites, and ensure no effects occur to cultural resources at the vicinity. The ongoing management of the resources in the parcel may become more complicated by such things as emergency situations, inadvertent activities, or personnel changes, which may exacerbate the possibility of noncompliance with the Regional PA, and lead to adverse effects to cultural resources.

The existing Texas Canyon Fire Station has not currently been authorized for decommissioning, demolition, and removal, due to known resource complications. Heritage Program Manager written authorization of that portion of the project is pending submission of proposals for review and comment.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action: The Fire Station is relocated to its proposed location. No cultural resources have been identified at the proposed location. The Forest Heritage Program Manager has provided written approval (08SCM28PIW) for the work specified as the preferred alternative, to construct a new facility within the boundaries of the former District Office location. Activities performed under the proposed project at that location do not require specific standard resource protection measures, as the parcel has been surveyed by a professional Archaeologist and no resources were identified. The location demonstrates marked prior disturbance, which has been documented in Archaeological Reconnaissance Reports (e.g., ARR# 05-01-SA-74). Pursuant to the Regional PA, the project activities at that location may be performed under exemption.

While ground-disturbing activities generally have the potential to disturb or destroy cultural resources, implementation under certain restrictions is not expected to have any direct effects on known cultural resource sites located within the project area. In the course of project implementation, should any additional (and presently unknown) archaeological artifacts or features be detected, all work will cease at that location until appropriate consultation with the Forest Heritage Program Manager occurs.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Construction noise and dust: Watering of ground disturbance areas will be performed to minimize construction-related dust. To mitigate the effect of construction noise on adjacent residences, construction work hours will be limited to Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.

To minimize or avoid potential impacts associated with the proposed action, the following management recommendations are proposed:

1. To avoid degrading water quality in Bouquet Creek, located downhill from the proposed project site, all site runoff must flow away from the creek. Site runoff into Bouquet Creek is not allowed during construction activities. Additionally, project design must ensure that the use/occupancy of the proposed facilities will not contribute site runoff into Bouquet Creek.
2. All staging of equipment, tools, and people will remain in the visible footprint of the past Santa Clara/Mojave Rivers Ranger District site.
3. To limit the spread and establishment of invasive plant species into the project area, all off-road heavy equipment used during project implementation will be free of

noxious weeds and seeds or invasive exotic weeds and seeds before entering the project area. Additionally, all hand tools, (picks, shovels, etc), must also be free of noxious weeds and seeds or invasive exotic weeds and seeds. The Forest Botanist will provide guidance for a wash down method that will be effective and practical.

4. Any reseeding or planting plans must first be approved by the Forest Botanist. Any landscaping will utilize native plants appropriate to the site conditions.
5. Any mulch, hay or rice straw brought to the site must be certified weed free.
6. During project implementation and after the project is completed, monitor the site for noxious weeds. Monitoring should be conducted monthly for the first year and then on a bi-monthly basis. District personnel can be trained by the Forest Botanist to conduct this monitoring activity. Any new populations of noxious weeds will be immediately treated as directed by the Forest Botanist.
7. All appropriate BMPs shall be implemented to minimize damage to surface soil structure and to reduce potential for erosion and sediment transport to drainages due to project activities.
8. Equipment refueling must be conducted in a manner that will ensure no contamination of soils or water will occur. Refueling cannot occur within 100 feet of any drainage or riparian area.
9. All excavation must be implemented in a manner that reduces the potential for entrapment of small mammals, reptiles or amphibians. Drift nets or other exclusionary fencing can be placed around excavations to reduce the potential for individuals entering excavated areas. If an excavation is to remain open for more than 12 hours it must include some means for small mammals, reptiles and amphibians to escape. This can be accomplished by placement of a ramp that reasonably allows trapped individuals to crawl or walk out of the excavation. Before an excavation is backfilled, it must be checked to ensure that there are no live individuals inside. Backfilling cannot occur until the excavation is clear of all live individuals.
10. Project generated garbage must be properly stored/disposed of on a daily basis. When operations are complete, any excess materials or debris shall be removed from the work area.
11. All personnel involved in project implementation will receive a briefing from the project biologist to describe sensitive resources that may be encountered in the project area. Wildlife encountered during the course of project implementation should be given the opportunity to evacuate the site. Personnel will be reminded that harassment, handling or removal of wildlife from the site is not permitted.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes and non-Forest Service persons during the development of this environmental assessment:

Della Snyder-Velto of the USFWS Ventura Field office (pers. comm. 6/13/08).

APPENDICES

Air Quality.

The project resides in the South Coast Air Pollution District. To meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act a project proponent will need to demonstrate that the air emissions from the direct and indirect project related activities conform to the State Implementation Plan. This process is outline in the General Conformity Rule (1990 Clean Air Act Amendments) (Section 176 (c) of the Clean Air Act (40 CFR part 51, subpart W, and part 93, subpart B.). However, according to the General Conformity Q&A section at the following EPA web address: <http://www.epa.gov/oar/genconform/faq.htm#5> ,

Federal Actions that are exempt from the General Conformity Regulations include:

- Actions covered by transportation conformity,
- *Actions with emissions clearly at or below de minimis levels,*
- Actions listed as exempt in the rule, or
- Actions covered by a Presumed-to-Conform approved list.

Under 40 CFR 93.153 (g), Federal actions can be presumed to conform as follows ... (g)(2) "*The Federal agency must provide documentation that the total of direct and indirect emissions from such future actions would be below the emission rates for a conformity determination that are established in paragraph (b) of this section, based, for example, on similar actions taken over recent years.*" The paragraph (b) levels, aka "de minimis" levels are included below.

40 CFR 93 § 153 defines *de minimis* levels, that is, the minimum threshold for which a conformity determination must be performed, for various criteria pollutants in various areas. The information is summarized here:

Pollutant	Area Type	Tons/Year
Ozone (VOC or NOx)	Serious nonattainment	50
	Severe nonattainment	25
	Extreme nonattainment	10
	Other areas outside an ozone transport region	100
Ozone (NOx)	Marginal and moderate nonattainment inside an ozone transport region	100
	Maintenance	100
Ozone (VOC)	Marginal and moderate nonattainment inside an ozone transport region	50
	Maintenance within an ozone transport region	50
	Maintenance outside an ozone transport region	100
Carbon monoxide, SO2 and NO2	All nonattainment & maintenance	100
PM-10	Serious nonattainment	70
	Moderate nonattainment and maintenance	100

Lead (Pb)

All nonattainment & maintenance

25

This project is presumed to conform under subparagraph (g)(2), by comparison with similar action. The similar action is the County library construction in Acton (see bottom of table below, for data).

Air quality calculations were performed by a proponent of the Antelope-Pardee transmission line construction project within the Angeles National Forest boundary. According to that air quality calculations, more than half of the emissions would be as a result of 1200 hours of helicopter usage in a year. That project would also grade dozens of miles of dirt roads translating in hundreds of acres, and involves thousands of hours of heavy equipment operations. The maximum annual emissions (tons/year) estimated for this project are below the de minimis levels in the table above.

Maximum Emissions	Annual (tons/year)	(SCAB)					
		CO	NO _x	PM10	SO _x	VOC	PM2.5
Onroad	Vehicles	2.2	2.33	0.05	0	0.29	0.05
Offroad	Vehicles/Equipment	4	5.51	0.43	0.01	0.82	0.43
	Helicopters	4.88	6.52	0.36	0.05	0.78	0.36
	Fugitive Dust	---	---	12.05	---	---	2.24
	Totals	11.09	14.35	12.89	0.06	1.88	3.08

On the other hand, the proposed project would involve no helicopter use, no road grading, would include site preparation on approximately one to two acres of land, and involve a few hundred hours of heavy equipment operations.

In addition to comparison with similar actions, we estimated the heavy equipment usage required for the construction of the proposed project; total emissions are shown near the bottom of the following table.

SCAB Fleet Average Emission Factors (Diesel)

Source: Off-road Mobile Source Emission Factors (Scenario Years 2007 – 2025)

<http://www.aqmd.gov/CEQA/handbook/offroad/offroad.html>

2008								
Air Basin	SC							
Equipment	MaxHP	(lb/hr) ROG	(lb/hr) CO	(lb/hr) NOX	(lb/hr) SOX	(lb/hr) PM	(lb/hr) CO2	(lb/hr) CH4
Crushing/Proc. Equipment	175	0.2596	0.9790	2.0557	0.0019	0.1141	167	0.0234
Forklifts	120	0.0724	0.2304	0.4055	0.0004	0.0402	31.2	0.0065
Generator Sets	50	0.1238	0.3024	0.3155	0.0004	0.0307	30.6	0.0112
Graders	120	0.1780	0.5585	1.0405	0.0009	0.0948	75.0	0.0161
Off-Highway Trucks	250	0.1822	0.4799	1.8617	0.0019	0.0659	167	0.0164
Other General Industrial Equipment	15	0.0066	0.0391	0.0466	0.0001	0.0026	6.4	0.0006
Other General Industrial Equipment	250	0.1553	0.4131	1.6545	0.0015	0.0579	136	0.0140
Paving Equipment	175	0.1757	0.6336	1.3860	0.0011	0.0760	101	0.0159
Rollers	120	0.1363	0.4271	0.8203	0.0007	0.0703	59.0	0.0123
Trenchers	50	0.2019	0.4556	0.3714	0.0004	0.0438	32.9	0.0182

Equipment	days	(tons) ROG	(tons) CO	(tons) NOX	(tons) SOX	(tons) PM	(tons) CO2	(tons) CH4
Crushing/Proc. Equipment	5	0.0052	0.0196	0.0411	0.0000	0.0023	3.3452	0.0005
Forklifts	15	0.0043	0.0138	0.0243	0.0000	0.0024	1.8735	0.0004
Generator Sets	40	0.0198	0.0484	0.0505	0.0001	0.0049	4.8997	0.0018

Graders	3	0.0021	0.0067	0.0125	0.0000	0.0011	0.8996	0.0002
Off-Highway Trucks	10	0.0073	0.0192	0.0745	0.0001	0.0026	6.6618	0.0007
Other General Industrial Equipment	5	0.0001	0.0008	0.0009	0.0000	0.0001	0.1279	0.0000
Other General Industrial Equipment	5	0.0031	0.0083	0.0331	0.0000	0.0012	2.7117	0.0003
Paving Equipment	3	0.0021	0.0076	0.0166	0.0000	0.0009	1.2123	0.0002
Rollers	4	0.0022	0.0068	0.0131	0.0000	0.0011	0.9438	0.0002
Trenchers	12	0.0097	0.0219	0.0178	0.0000	0.0021	1.5801	0.0009
Est. total this project		0.0560	0.1530	0.2845	0.0003	0.0187	24.2555	0.0051
Antelope-Pardee (/yr)			11.09	14.35	0.06	12.89	----	1.88
Acton library	6		26	7	----	13	----	----
deminimus (tons/yr)		-----	100	25	100	70	-----	25

The Air quality issue will therefore not be analyzed further in this document. However, mitigation measure to reduce air pollution and noise as a result of this project are provided in the mitigation section.