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Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: _____

Project Title: Draft Williams Hill Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Plan and Environmental Assessment

Lead Agency: US Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management

Contact Name: Sky Murphy

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Project Location: (five miles west of) San Ardo, California County of Monterey

City *County*

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

Current off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreational opportunities at Williams Hill are limited to 15 miles of roads. The draft plan considers two (action) alternatives to establish up to twenty (20) miles of new OHV routes and four (4) new staging areas to increase recreation opportunities, including a small motocross track for less experienced riders and potential for expansion of the developed campground facilities. Appendix A contains maps of routes and staging that would apply to Alternative A and Alternative B.

Williams Hill encompasses approximately 8,500 acres of BLM-managed public lands ranging from gentle hills to mountainous terrain. The hilly terrain is characterized by impressive shale formations, offering visitors great views of the surrounding Salinas Valley. Proper management of these resources keeps working public lands healthy and productive for current and future generations of Americans. The California State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program supports this effort.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

New off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes and other potential recreation improvements would have direct beneficial impacts on recreation resources in southern Monterey County. The impacts described in the EA suggest there is potential for (direct) short-term (minor) adverse impacts to wildlife and their associated habitats, and (indirect) long-term (minor) impacts to current visitors from increased annual visitor use. Following public comments on the draft range of alternatives, the BLM will identify a preferred alternative that may include further analysis of specific management actions based on coordination with the OHV Division to support construction, operations, and maintenance.

Under all alternatives, the BLM will incorporate Project Design Features to minimize adverse impacts on resources and other existing uses consistent with current laws, regulations, and BLM policies. The purpose for these project design features is to avoid or reduce impacts of development of trails and other facilities to support OHV recreation to less than significant levels. Appendix B contains project design features that would apply to all alternatives.

Consistent with the requirements of Project Agreement G19-01-01-P01, the BLM will incorporate a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and a Soil Conservation Plan (SCP) into the final Williams Hill recreation plan and EA.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

During public scoping from June 4 to July 6, 2021 comments were submitted by OHV users in support of the proposal. Two environmental organizations and several adjacent landowners also identified issues and concerns related to potential impacts of increased OHV recreation opportunities in the area. A summary of the public scoping comment is included in section 1.3 of the draft plan and EA.

The effects of the two action alternatives are not considered to be highly controversial because the effects of these activities are well-understood. The project design features incorporated into Appendix B are designed to minimize potential effects associated with these uses.

Scoping comments noted that Williams Hill is also a popular spot for hunting and target shooting. To avoid an increase in user conflicts they recommended the BLM consider an alternative that would clearly designate target shooting areas and separate them from designated OHV use areas. They also suggest making sure they are well-marked on maps and signage, so visitors know where and/or when each activity is allowed.

However, the BLM has not developed an alternative that would designate target shooting areas. Instead, the OHV route concepts being considered are designed to avoid areas that are currently popular for recreational target shooting. Current management includes restrictions on target shooting within 150 yards of developed recreation sites, and the BLM would use maps and other information to educate visitors about responsible OHV use and target shooting practices in the SRMA to minimize conflicts.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California State Office of Historic Preservation
California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division