



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825

AUG 12 2011

Dear Interested Party,

Thank you for your interest in the proposed fee-to-trust acquisition by the United States for the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation (Tribe) in San Diego, California. Since the public release and comment period on the original Environmental Assessment (Draft EA), dated August 2009, several government to government meetings between the Tribe, BIA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have occurred with respect to consultation under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). The outcome of these meetings along with the public comments received on the Draft EA, led the Tribe and BIA to form a reduced-impact Proposed Action ("Mitigated Proposed Action") in the Final EA, which reduces environmental impacts from the proposed project developments and reflects a reduction from 30 original parcels to 21 parcels for a total acreage reduction of 1,966.14 original acres to 1,357.47 acres.

The Final EA document is a revised version of the original EA that reflects the responses to comments received on the Draft EA, with revised text shown in underline/strikeout format, and some new and updated studies and appendices. The Final EA will be made available for a 30-day public comment period, commencing August 15, 2011. All written comments on the Final EA must be received by September 13, 2011.

Copies of the Final EA are available for public review at the following locations: Sycuan Tribal Administration Building, 5485 Casino Way, 2nd floor, El Cajon, CA 92019, telephone (619) 445-6002; and two San Diego County Library branches: Rancho San Diego Branch, 11555 Via Rancho San Diego, El Cajon, CA 92019, telephone (619) 660-5370, and El Cajon Branch, 201 E. Douglas, El Cajon, CA 92020, telephone (619) 588-3718. The Final EA is also available online at www.sycuanea.com.

You may mail or hand-carry written comments to Amy Dutschke, Regional Director, Pacific Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2800 Cottage Way Room W-2820, Sacramento, CA 95825. Please include your name, return address, and the caption "Final EA Comments, Proposed Sycuan Fee-to-Trust Project" on the first page of your written comments.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Patrick O'Mallan, Environmental Protection Specialist at (916) 978-6044 or John Rydzik, Chief, Division of Environmental, Cultural Resources Management and Safety (DECRMS) at (916) 978-6051.

Sincerely,

Regional Director

Cc: Daniel J. Tucker, Chairman, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
Sid Morris, Director of Planning and Development, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation

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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PROPOSED SYCUAN BAND OF THE KUMEYAAY NATION FEE-TO-TRUST ACQUISITION

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Notice is hereby given that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Pacific Regional Office, has prepared a Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed trust acquisition of 21 parcels totaling approximately 1,357.47 acres, by the United States for the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation (Tribe). This Final EA document is a revised version of the original EA (dated August 2009) that reflects the responses to comments received, with revised text shown in underline/strikeout format, and some new and updated studies and appendices. Since the public release and comment period on the original EA, several government to government meetings between the Tribe, BIA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have occurred with respect to consultation under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). The outcome of these meetings, along with the public comments received on the Draft EA, led the Tribe and BIA to form a reduced-impact Proposed Action ("Mitigated Proposed Action"), which reduces environmental impacts from the proposed project developments and reflects a reduction from 30 original parcels to 21 parcels for a total acreage reduction of 1,966.14 original acres to 1,357.47 acres.

The subject property is located within San Diego County adjacent to the Sycuan Reservation in Township (T) 16 South (S), Range (R) 1 East (E), Sections 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24 and T16S, R2E, Sections 7 and 18 of the San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian, on the "El Cajon" and "Alpine" California U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles. The project site is located in unincorporated San Diego County, near the City of El Cajon and the communities of Crest, Granite Hills, Dehesa, and Harbison Canyon. The BIA is the federal agency that is charged with reviewing and approving tribal applications pursuant to 25 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 151 and governing the acquisition of land by the U.S. into trust status for Indian tribes under the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). Based on the analysis and impacts discussed in the Final EA and comments received during the public review period, the BIA will decide whether to approve a Finding of No Significant Impact, direct further work on the EA, or initiate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed project involves several elements including the implementation of the Tribally adopted comprehensive Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan; the construction of permanent facilities for the Tribe's annual Traditional Gathering and Pow Wow event (Pow Wow); the construction of a secondary access road for the Reservation; the construction of up to 50 housing units for Tribal members; and the construction of other facilities to foster the Tribe's economic development and recreational opportunities. Transferring the Sycuan Property into Trust will restore Tribal control and administration of part of the Tribe's aboriginal territory.

The public comment period for the Final EA will be open for 30 days, beginning on August 15, 2011 and ending on September 13, 2011. Copies of the Final EA are available for public review at the following locations: Sycuan Tribal Administration Building, 5485 Casino Way, 2nd floor, El Cajon, CA 92019, telephone (619) 445-6002; and two San Diego County Library branches: Rancho San Diego Branch, 11555 Via Rancho San Diego, El Cajon, CA 92019, telephone (619) 660-5370, and El Cajon Branch, 201 E. Douglas, El Cajon, CA 92020, telephone (619) 588-3718. The EA is also available online at www.sycuanea.com.

For information or to obtain a copy of the Final EA, please contact Patrick O'Mallan, Environmental Protection Specialist, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pacific Regional Office, 2800 Cottage Way Room W-2820, Sacramento, California 95825, telephone (916) 978-6044. Written comments should be mailed to Amy Dutschke, Regional Director, Pacific Regional Office, at the above address.