



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
81440-2011-CPA-0088

February 28, 2012

Paul M. Delaney Ph.D.
Copper Mountain Community College
6162 Rotary Way, P.O. Box 1398
Joshua Tree, California 92252

Subject: Minor Amendment to the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Copper Mountain College Expansion Site (TE-143444-0)

Dear Dr. Delaney:

We have received your request, dated and received in our office on January 27, 2012, to remove scat from the desert tortoise translocation area, an action that requires a minor amendment to the Copper Mountain College Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). In this plan, Copper Mountain College (College) identified the measures that it will take to minimize and mitigate take of the federally threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) during expansion of existing campus facilities into adjacent desert tortoise habitat. Based on this HCP, we issued an incidental take permit to the College in August of 2007. You are now requesting to modify this HCP to allow the removal of scat from within the translocation area. Your request and our response are made pursuant to 50 CFR 13.23 (a) and (b).

In the HCP, the College committed to perform monitoring and adaptive management activities for desert tortoises to ensure continued achievement of this HCP's biological objectives. Your request to collect all scat during each survey was made because existing survey protocol is not good for detecting old scat. Removing scat from the translocation area during an annual survey will aid in identifying new scat during subsequent surveys.

Monitoring and mitigation activities have been implemented in a conscientious manner, and all required compliance reports have been submitted in a timely fashion. As previously stated, removing scat will aid in detecting new scat in subsequent surveys. Therefore, we approve this minor amendment to the HCP.

Paul M. Delaney Ph.D.

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We appreciate your efforts to coordinate with us regarding this minor amendment. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Brian Croft of my staff at (909) 382-2677.

Sincerely,



Carl T. Benz
Assistant Field Supervisor