



March 15, 2017

California State Parks
OHMVR Division
1725 23rd Street
Sacramento, CA 95816
Attention: Grants Manager

Re: Parkwide Program to Inventory, Assess, Restore, and Protect Damage from OHV Use

We would like to take the opportunity to comment on the Grants and Cooperative Agreements program and voice our support for funding Death Valley National Park's Inventory, Assess and Restore and Protect Damage from OHV Use program (14-0001849). Friends of the Inyo is a locally-based nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the stewardship, exploration and preservation of the Eastern Sierra's public lands and wildlife, including Death Valley National Park. Over our 30 year history, Friends of the Inyo has become an active partner with the National Park Service and other public lands agencies. Friends of the Inyo's comments represent a local and regional membership of over 700 and thousands of supporters and volunteers who care about the landscapes and values of the Eastern Sierra and the California Desert.

We are deeply concerned about the illegal trespass of vehicles in Death Valley National Park this year, especially the Racetrack Playa, Badwater Basin, Devils Cornfield and Ibex Dunes. We know the NPS is unable to fund the restoration work and associated follow up themselves with ongoing reductions to their budget. We ask that California State Parks please approve this three-year grant to restore damage done by off-road drivers throughout the park. This is the first year that Death Valley National Park has submitted a grant request and the need is dire. The park saw a record number of users in 2016 and visitation is projected to increase further.

Our desert ecosystems are quite fragile and impacts such as tire tracks will last forever without proper restoration. The park has several endangered and endemic species, including desert tortoise and Eureka Dunes evening primrose, which are both found in areas previously damaged by OHV use. Education is another key piece to this grant. Often visitors do not know they have entered the National Park due to its size, remote nature and number of backcountry access points. This grant emphasizes signage and barricades where incursions are occurring regularly.

In years past Friends of the Inyo has provided group stewardship projects and volunteer hours to Death Valley National Park and we are interested in doing so again if this grant is funded. The stewardship and protection of the park is very important to us. We urge you to fund this grant so that vehicle damage can be repaired and hopefully prevented in the future. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jora Fogg
Preservation Manager
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