

**NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PROPOSED PICAYUNE RANCHERIA HOTEL AND CASINO PROJECT**

AGENCY: National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC)

ACTION: Finding of no Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY:

The Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians of California (Tribe) has submitted a request to the NIGC for the approval of a management agreement between the Tribe and Cascade Entertainment Group, LLC, for the development, construction and operation of a hotel and casino complex on existing tribal land.

The proposed 176,000 square-foot gaming, and entertainment facility and the 120,000 square-foot hotel are to be developed on 48.5 acres within the Picayune Rancheria. The proposed federal action is the approval of the management agreement by the NIGC. Approval of this document will allow the Tribe to construct and operate the proposed gaming facility as planned, subject to the conditions of the existing Tribe/State Gaming Compact and this FONSI.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jim Harriman, Technical Reviewer
National Indian Gaming Commission
1441 L Street NW, Suite 9100
Washington, DC 20005
(703) 625-9164

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY:

The draft Environmental Assessment was reviewed during a thirty-day public comment period and several comments were received. The final EA for the project has been prepared in full consideration of the comments received. This FONSI, responses to the public comments, and final EA will be distributed to all commenting persons and agencies. Copies of the EA are available upon request at the following address.

Condor Earth Technologies, Inc.
21663 Brian Lane, P.O. Box 3905
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 532-0361

BACKGROUND:

Gaming is a unique opportunity for the Tribe to develop an economic base. This opportunity is afforded the Tribe under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) and was sanctioned by the State of California through a State/Tribe Gaming Compact approved by the Governor and the Secretary of the Interior.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

The Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians Hotel and Casino Center will be a 296, 000 square-foot facility on a 48.53 acre site located in Madera County, California with access from California State Route 41, midway between Fresno and Yosemite National Park. The facility will contain a 120,000 square-foot 200 room hotel, 52,000 square-feet of gaming area, three restaurants, a bar/entertainment lounge, 1000 seat special events room and associated infrastructure/administrative areas. Adjacent parking will be provided for 1870 automobiles, six buses, and 39 recreational vehicles. Two potable water storage tanks, three reclaimed water storage tanks, a potable water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant will also be constructed on Rancheria lands.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

An EA documenting the planning process and analyzing implementation impacts of the proposed project has been completed. No significant unmitigated adverse environmental impacts are indicated by the EA.

The impact on the quality of the human environment is judged to be of minor adverse impact and significant beneficial economic impact to both the Tribe and the surrounding communities. There are no significant unmitigated impacts on public health and safety. The site contains no eligible or listed National Register of Historic Places sites or any known significant archeological resources which will be adversely impacted by the project. There are no significant unmitigated adverse impacts on endangered species or their critical habitat. The proposed land use will have no significant unmitigated impacts on declared wetlands. The proposed land use will not significantly impact water quality or air quality. There are no significant unmitigated impacts on traffic flow.

REQUIRED MITIGATION

All mitigation measures described in the Final EA on pages 105-121, Mitigation 1.2 through 13.4 inclusive, (SECTION 6.0 Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into Project Design) as being implemented to reduce potentially significant adverse impacts of the project to a point of insignificance, are conditions of the approval of this project. NIGC's approval of the Management Agreement and signing of this FONSI makes construction and operation of the gaming facility contingent upon implementation of these mitigation measures.

DETERMINATION:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1500-1508), I find that the proposed federal action, to approve the management agreement between the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians and Cascade Entertainment Group, LLC, when the mitigation measures are followed, does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this proposal.



Montie R. Deer, Chairman
National Indian Gaming Commission

02/19/02

Date