

## 4.9 Land Use

This section focuses on the possible impacts of the alternatives on land use not described in other sections. Within the study area, BLM manages the majority of federal non-military lands. Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and land with other special considerations are discussed in Section 3.10, Recreation. See Figure 3.9-1 for land ownership.

A significant impact on land use will occur if there is:

- ❖ Inconsistency with applicable federal, state, and local land use policies, plans, designations, and zoning;
- ❖ Loss of aesthetics and visual resource quality;
- ❖ Change in ownership or use of 1,000 or more acres of private lands to public ownership; or
- ❖ Change in use of 1,000 or more acres of public lands from one agency to another thereby changing the allowed uses.

### 4.9.1 Alternative I: East/West

#### 4.9.1.1 Impacts

##### Federal/Public Lands

Alternative I consists of approximately 141,890 acres of public, state, and private lands, and will also reintroduce 23,350 acres of land on Fort Irwin (in the UTM 90 area) for training use. Table 4.9-1 lists the approximate acreage allocated from federal, state, private, and DoD lands for each proposed alternative. As the lands are acquired from state, private, and other federal use, management prescriptions will change. There is no significant impact in terms of inconsistencies with land use plans or ordinances because the land within the alternative has been removed from BLM jurisdiction by virtue of the Fort Irwin Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 2001.

**Table 4.9-1: Land Ownership And Acreage**

ALTERNATIVES	BLM LAND (ACRES)	STATE LAND (ACRES)	PRIVATE LANDS (ACRES)	DoD LANDS	TOTAL LAND (ACRES)
I. East/West	0	2,249	12,683	126,956	141,888
II. East Gate/South	48,418	1,382	34,978	71,514	156,292
III. East Gate	0	1,297	422	46,911	48,629
IV. Southwest/UTM 90/ East Gate	21,885	2,249	30,671	128,358	183,164
V. East Gate/UTM 90	0	1,296	451	70,095	71,842
VI. No Action	0	0	0	0	0

### **West Mojave Plan**

None of the lands within this alternative are within the West Mojave Planning area, therefore no impacts or inconsistencies with the plan will occur.

### **Multiple-Use Classifications, ACECs, and UPAs**

No ACECs or UPAs are located in this alternative.

### **Livestock Grazing**

Alternative I contains 670 acres of the Cronese Lake grazing allotment, all of the inactive Goldstone sheep grazing allotment and a portion of the inactive Superior sheep grazing allotment. The loss of land to the Cronese Lake allotment is equal to 1.3 Animal Unit Months (AUM). No other year-round allotments are available on public lands adjacent to the leaseholder's ranch nor is it likely that any additional year-round cattle allotment will be made available on public lands within the southern California area. As the Superior and Goldstone allotments are inactive and not anticipated to be re-activated, there is no significant impact from the loss of these allotments. The loss of the Cronese allotment represents a very small percentage of the total allotment and will not result in a significant impact due to the overall size of the allotment.

### **State Lands**

In general, Alternative I is primarily located on public land. The use of this land will require the acquisition of intermingled state and private land. Alternative I includes approximately 2,250 acres of state land scattered throughout the area that would be acquired for use by the Army. The SLC and other applicable state agencies would transfer land titles to the Federal Government for management by the Army. This could be a significant impact on land use.

### **Private Lands and Residential Uses**

Under Alternative I, private lands consist of approximately 12,680 acres. Private lands will be acquired for transfer to the federal government for management by the Army. Landowners would be paid just compensation and relocation benefits if applicable. Acquisition of private lands will involve condemnation and purchase of private residences by the Army and provision of relocation assistance, resulting in a short-term significant impact on individual landowners. There are no foreseeable significant regional impacts on the housing supply or the opportunity to have an isolated residential parcel or a loss of one percent of the residences within 50 miles of study area.

There is one resident in Alternative I. This property is located in Superior Valley. The relocation should not create a significant impact.

Under Alternative I, private land within the BLM's proposed DWMA's will be purchased to mitigate for impacts to threatened and endangered species. This purchase creates two significant impacts. First, land would be removed from the potential of private development, and second, land use would change from private to public ownership thus allowing the opening of these areas for public use for recreation and other public purposes that are compatible with the conservation purpose for which they were purchased. Each of these is a significant land use alteration both directly and indirectly, as the purchase of this quantity of private land would likely have direct and indirect effects on adjacent land uses in these areas. The socioeconomic impact of this proposed mitigation measure is discussed below under socioeconomics chapter .

## **Mining**

Within the eastern portion of Alternative I is the operational Silver Lake Mine, which produces mainly iron. The impact of the proposed land expansion on the mine is discussed in Section 4.11, Mining.

## **Adjacent Land Uses**

Nine residences are located next to the southern boundary of the study area near the power line corridor and north of the Harvard off-ramp on I-15. These residences are located approximately 15 miles southwest of the eastern portion of this alternative boundary and about 5 miles south of the existing southern boundary of Fort Irwin. These residences are not expected to be substantially affected by proposed NTC and Fort Irwin operations.

The Calico Mountains and Coyote Lake area south of the western portion of Alternative I and are not expected to be impacted by proposed use in this alternative. There are approximately 150 residents living in this area. Land use incompatibility between the residential properties and military activities in the adjacent areas will be less than significant and will not substantially change any business operations or affect the ability to have an isolated residence. There is no significant impact.

The St. Anthony Coptic Orthodox Monastery is located south of the southern most boundary of Alternative I. Alternative I would not hinder the Monastery inhabitants and visitors from practicing their religion. There is no significant impact.

## **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

The BLM has established a Visual Contrast Rating System, which assesses changes in the visual quality of a landscape based on the amount of contrast a project will have with existing conditions. The process is defined in BLM Manual 8431—Visual Resource Contrast System.

Training will involve major military actions, which will significantly alter vegetation coverage in impacted areas. During active maneuvers, dust clouds will be created from the military vehicles operating in flat areas. The consequences to a viewer will depend on the viewer's distance from the active area; however, dust will result in obstructed near-ground, middle-ground, or background views. Exceptions to the use of large vehicles include steep areas exceeding 20 percent slope. These areas, however, may be subject to degradation by smaller vehicles that have the capability to traverse such slopes. Key observation points (KOP) have been identified in areas accessible to the general public within the study area and are described in Section 3.9, Land Use. Viewsheds are also described, where foreground and middle-ground views are generally flat, and background views contain mountainous terrain (See Figure 3.9-2).

### *Key Observation Point 1*

Radio towers, wells, and possible urban operations facilities will be placed in the proposed expansion area, and thus, the contrast rating for structures is poor. Modifications to the proposed expansion area include changes in land surface and vegetation, which result in a moderate impact rating. Ruts and smooth areas change the surface form of the desert. The loss of vegetation will result in a smooth, non-textured appearance.

According to allowable management activities under VRM Class IV, the level of change to the characteristic landscape may be major, and may attract the attention of the casual observer without creating a significant impact. Therefore, this project will not create a significant impact.

#### *Key Observation Point 2*

According to allowable management activities under VRM Class IV, the level of change to the characteristic landscape may be major, and may attract the attention of the casual observer. Impacts are similar to KOP 1. The visual impact is not significant.

#### *Key Observation Point 3*

According to allowable management activities under VRM Class IV, the level of change to the characteristic landscape may be major, and may attract the attention of the casual observer. VRM Class III allows for partially retaining the existing character, and the level of change should be moderate. The visual impact would be in the Class III or Class IV areas. Therefore, there is no significant impact.

### **4.9.1.2 Mitigation**

Mitigation for Alternative I will include paying just compensation to private, State, and County landowners for property purchased within this alternative and property slated for purchase for outside of the alternative to mitigate impacts on T&E species. The mitigation land will be placed under the management of the BLM to consolidate federal land ownership for conservation purposes. Dust control measures and other measures restricting use of playas should reduce visual obscurities caused from fugitive dust generation. All mitigation is considered feasible and likely to occur as proposed because Congress has authorized approximately \$75 million dollars for conservation actions in relation to the proposed project by virtue of Public Law 106-554, H.R. 5666, Section 323 (2001).

## **4.9.2 Alternative II: East Gate/South**

### **4.9.2.1 Impacts**

#### **Federal/Public Lands**

Alternative II will require the additional withdrawal of approximately 84,790 acres of public land to military use. Put into training use 46,910 acres of congressionally withdrawn lands on Fort Irwin and require the purchase of 1,718 acres and reintroduce approximately 24,430 acres of military land to use for training and, require the purchase of 36,359 acres of, state, county and private lands. This alternative will also require the purchase of private lands as mitigation for T&E species though the exact quantity will be dependent upon the outcome of the Biological Assessment for the proposed project. Impacts are similar to Alternative I.

#### **West Mojave Plan**

Alternative II would remove approximately 107,600 acres (verify) from the CDCA and West Mojave Planning Areas. This would be a significant impact as the intended use is inconsistent with these land use plans and proposals.

#### **Multiple-Use Classifications, ACECs, and UPAs**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative I.

## **Livestock Grazing**

Within Alternative II there are approximately 670 acres of the Cronese grazing allotment. Impacts to the Cronese grazing area are similar to Alternative I.

## **State Lands**

Alternative II will acquire approximately 1,380 acres of scattered state land for Army use. State Lands would be purchased from the SLC and other applicable state agencies by the federal government with management transferred to the Army. There is no significant impact.

## **Private Lands and Residential Use**

Under Alternative II, private lands consist of approximately 34,980 acres. Private lands will be purchased at just compensation. A cement plant operates within this area that provides a large quantity of cement for on-going projects at Fort Irwin. There is evidence of a closed business that used to be a plant nursery near Coyote Lake. According to a feasibility study in 1998, there are 18 recorded residential properties in this alternative around Coyote Lake. However several undocumented or un-permitted and part-time residences are present. There are no foreseeable significant regional impacts on the housing supply. Relocation will not create a significant impact.

Under Alternative II, private land within the BLM's proposed DWMA's will be purchased to mitigate for impacts to threatened and endangered species. This purchase creates two significant impacts. First, land would be removed from the potential of private development, and second, land use would change from private to public ownership thus allowing the opening of these areas for public use for recreation and other public purposes that are compatible with the conservation purpose for which they were purchased. Each of these is a significant land use alteration both directly and indirectly, as the purchase of this quantity of private land would likely have direct and indirect effects on adjacent land uses in these areas. The socioeconomic impact of this proposed mitigation measure is discussed below in the Socioeconomic Impacts section.

## **Mining**

Silver Lake Mine falls within Alternative II, and produces mainly iron. The impact of the proposed expansion on the mine is discussed in Section 4.11, Mining.

## **Adjacent Land Uses**

Nine residences are located adjacent to the southern boundary of this alternative near the power corridor and north of the Harvard off-ramp on I-15. These residences are located approximately 5 miles south of the existing southern boundary of Fort Irwin. These residences are not expected to be substantially affected by proposed NTC and Fort Irwin operations. The Cronese Lake ACEC is adjacent to the southern part of this alternative.

The St. Anthony Coptic Orthodox Monastery is located just south of Alternative II southeast of Coyote Dry Lake. Alternative II would not hinder the Monastery inhabitants or visitors from practicing their religion. There is no significant impact.

## **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

### *Key Observation Point 1*

KOP 1 is not located in Alternative II.

*Key Observation Point 2*

KOP 2 is not located in Alternative II.

*Key Observation Point 3*

The impacts should be the same as in Alternative I.

**4.9.2.2 Mitigation**

Mitigation for Alternative II will include paying just compensation to private, State, and County landowners for property purchased within this alternative and property slated for purchase outside of the alternative to mitigate impacts on T&E species. The mitigation land would be placed under the management of the BLM to consolidate federal land ownership for conservation purposes. Dust control measures and other measures restricting use of playas should reduce visual obscurities caused from fugitive dust generation.

All mitigation is considered feasible and likely to occur as proposed because Congress has authorized approximately \$75 million dollars for conservation actions in relation to the proposed project by virtue of Public Law 106-554, H.R. 5666, Section 323 (2001).

**4.9.3 Alternative III: East Gate**

**4.9.3.1 Impacts**

**Federal/Public Lands**

All lands under Alternative III are currently under the jurisdiction of the Army, pursuant to the congressional withdrawal act. There is no significant impact in terms of inconsistencies with applicable federal, state, and local land use policies, plans, designations, and zoning.

**West Mojave Plan**

There are no lands within Alternative III that are within the CDCA and West Mojave Planning Area.

**Multiple-Use Classifications, ACECs, and UPAs**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative I.

**Livestock Grazing**

Within Alternative III there are 670 acres of the Cronese grazing allotment. Impacts to the Cronese grazing area are similar to Alternative I.

**State Lands**

Under Alternative III, approximately 1,300 acres of state land scattered throughout the East Gate area will be transferred to the U.S. Army. Management authority will be transferred from the SLC and other applicable state agencies to the U.S. Army. Impacts are similar to Alternative I.

**Private Lands and Residential Uses**

This alternative consists of approximately 420 acres of private land. These lands would be purchased by the federal government and transferred to the jurisdiction of the Army. There is no significant impact.

Under alternative III, up to 20,000 acres of private land within the BLM's proposed DWMA's will be purchased to mitigate for impacts to threatened and endangered species. This purchase creates two significant impacts. First, land would be removed from the potential of private development, and second, land use would change from private to public ownership thus allowing the opening of these areas for public use for recreation and other public purposes that are compatible with the conservation purpose for which they were purchased. Each of these is a significant land use alteration both directly and indirectly, as the purchase of this quantity of private land would likely have direct and indirect effects on adjacent land uses in these areas. The socioeconomic impact of this proposed mitigation measure is discussed below in the Socioeconomic Impacts section..

No residential lands exist within this Alternative.

### **Mining**

Silver Lake Mine falls within Alternative III, and produces mainly iron. The impact of the expansion on the mine is discussed in Section 4.11, Mining.

### **Adjacent Land Uses**

The land adjacent to Alternative III is predominantly BLM managed land or owned by utilities located within BLM Planning Corridor D.

### **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

#### *Key Observation Point 1*

KOP 1 is not located in Alternative II.

#### *Key Observation Point 2*

KOP 2 is not located in Alternative II.

#### *Key Observation Point 3*

The impacts should be the same as in Alternative I.

#### **4.9.3.2 Mitigation**

Mitigation for Alternative III will include paying just compensation to private, State, and County landowners for property purchased within this alternative and property slated for purchase outside of the alternative to mitigate impacts on T&E species. The mitigation land would be placed under the management of the BLM to consolidate federal land ownership for conservation purposes. Dust control measures and other measures restricting use of playas should reduce visual obscurities caused from fugitive dust generation.

All mitigation is considered feasible and likely to occur as proposed because Congress has authorized approximately \$75 million dollars for conservation actions in relation to the proposed project by virtue of Public Law 106-554, H.R. 5666, Section 323 (2001). In addition, purchase and

payment of just compensation to landowners is required by the takings clause of the constitution of the United States.

#### **4.9.4 Alternative IV: Southwest/East Gate/UTM 90**

##### **4.9.4.1 Impacts**

###### **Federal/Public Lands**

Alternative IV will require the additional withdrawal of approximately 21,885 acres of public land. Put into training use 46,911 acres of congressionally withdrawn lands on Fort Irwin and require the purchase of 1,718 acres and reintroduce approximately 24,420 acres of existing land on Fort Irwin (the UTM 90 area) to use for training and, require the purchase of 32,921 acres of, state, county and private lands. This alternative will also require the purchase of up to 140,000 acres of private lands as mitigation for T&E species though the exact quantity will be dependent upon the outcome of the Biological Assessment for the proposed project. Impacts are similar to Alternative I.

###### **West Mojave Plan**

Alternative IV would remove approximately 133,740 acres from the CDCA and West Mojave Planning Areas. This is a potentially significant impact as the intended use is inconsistent with these applicable plans.

###### **Multiple-Use Classifications, ACECs, and UPAs**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative I.

###### **Livestock Grazing**

Alternative IV contains 670 acres of the Cronese Lake grazing allotment, all of the inactive Goldstone sheep grazing allotment and a portion of the inactive Superior sheep grazing allotment. The loss of land to the Cronese Lake allotment is equal to 1.3 Animal Unit Months (AUM). No other year-round allotments are available on public lands adjacent to the leaseholder's ranch nor is it likely that any year-round cattle allotment will be made available on public lands within the southern California area. As the Superior and Goldstone allotments are inactive and not anticipated to be re-activated, there is no significant impact from the loss of these allotments. The loss of the Cronese allotment represents a very small percentage of the total allotment and will not result in a significant impact due to the overall size of the allotment.

###### **State Lands**

Under this alternative, approximately 2,250 acres of state land scattered throughout the alternative area will be transferred to U.S. Army use. Management authority will be transferred from the SLC and other applicable state agencies to the U.S. Army. No significant impacts are expected.

###### **Private Lands and Residential Uses**

Under Alternative IV, private lands consist of approximately 30,670 acres. Private lands will be purchased at just compensation. A cement plant operates within this area that provides a large quantity of cement for on-going projects at Fort Irwin. There is evidence of a closed business that used to be a plant nursery near Coyote Lake. According to a feasibility study in 1998, there are 18 recorded residential properties in this alternative around Coyote Lake. However several undocumented or un-permitted and part-time residences are present. There are no foreseeable

significant regional impacts on the housing supply. Relocation will create only a short-term significant impact.

Under Alternative II, private land within the BLM's proposed DWMA's will be purchased to mitigate for impacts to threatened and endangered species. This purchase creates two significant impacts. First, land would be removed from the potential of private development, and second, land use would change from private to public ownership thus allowing the opening of these areas for public use for recreation and other public purposes that are compatible with the conservation purpose for which they were purchased. Each of these is a significant land use alteration both directly and indirectly, as the purchase of this quantity of private land would likely have direct and indirect effects on adjacent land uses in these areas. The socioeconomic impact of this proposed mitigation measure is discussed below in the Socioeconomic Impacts section.

### **Mining**

Silver Lakes Mine falls within Alternative IV, and produces mainly iron. The impact of the expansion on the mine is discussed in Section 4.11, Mining.

### **Adjacent Land Uses**

Nine residences are located adjacent to the southern boundary of the study area near the power line corridor and north of Harvard. These residences are located approximately 15 miles southwest of the Alternative IV boundary and about five miles south of the existing southern boundary of Fort Irwin. These residences are not expected to be substantially affected by the proposed NTC and Fort Irwin operations.

The Calico Mountains and Coyote Lake are to the south of the west part of this alternative. These areas are not expected to be impacted by this alternative. Land use incompatibility between the residential properties and military activities in the adjacent areas of this alternative area will be less than significant.

### **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

#### *Key Observation Point 1*

The impacts should be the same as Alternative I.

#### *Key Observation Point 2*

The impacts should be the same as Alternative I.

#### *Key Observation Point 3*

The impacts should be the same as Alternative I.

#### **4.9.4.2 Mitigation**

Mitigation for Alternative IV will include paying just compensation to private, State, and County landowners for property purchased within this alternative and property slated for purchase outside of the alternative to mitigate impacts on T&E species. The mitigation land would be placed under the management of the BLM to consolidate federal land ownership for conservation purposes. Dust control measures and other measures restricting use of playas should reduce visual obscurities caused from fugitive dust generation.

All mitigation is considered feasible and likely to occur as proposed because Congress has authorized approximately \$75 million dollars for conservation actions in relation to the proposed project by virtue of Public Law 106-554, H.R. 5666, Section 323 (2001).

#### **4.9.5 Alternative V: East Gate/UTM 90**

##### **4.9.5.1 Impacts**

###### **Federal/Public Lands**

Alternative V is similar to Alternative III, with the addition of the UTM 90 area, which is already a part of Fort Irwin but set aside for conservation purposes. A portion of the UTM 90 area will be brought back into use for Army operations, with a portion of it being set aside as conservation areas for the desert tortoise. There is no conflict with any land use plans as all lands within the alternative are presently under Army jurisdiction and control.

###### **West Mojave Plan**

No lands within Alternative V are within the CDCA or West Mojave Planning Area.

###### **Multiple-Use Classifications, ACECs, and UPAs**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative III.

###### **Livestock Grazing**

Within Alternative V there are 670 acres of the Cronese grazing allotment. Impacts to the Cronese grazing area are similar to Alternative I.

###### **State Lands**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative III.

###### **Private Lands and Residential Uses**

This alternative consists of approximately 420 acres of private land. These lands would be purchased by the United States and transferred to the jurisdiction of the Army. There is no significant impact.

Under Alternative V, up to 40,000 acres of private land within the BLM's proposed DWMA's will be purchased to mitigate for impacts to threatened and endangered species. This purchase creates two significant impacts. First, land would be removed from the potential of private development, and second, land use would change from private to public ownership thus allowing the opening of these areas for public use for recreation and other public purposes that are compatible with the conservation purpose for which they were purchased. Each of these is a significant land use alteration both directly and indirectly, as the purchase of this quantity of private land would likely have direct and indirect effects on adjacent land uses in these areas. The socioeconomic impact of this proposed mitigation measure is discussed below under socioeconomics chapter

###### **Mining**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative III.

### **Adjacent Land Uses**

The environmental impacts under this alternative would be the same as Alternative III.

### **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

#### *Key Observation Point 1*

KOP 1 is not located in Alternative II.

#### *Key Observation Point 2*

KOP 2 is not located in Alternative II.

#### *Key Observation Point 3*

The impacts should be the same as Alternative I.

#### **4.9.5.2 Mitigation**

Mitigation for Alternative V will include paying just compensation to private, State, and County landowners for property purchased within this alternative and property slated for purchase outside of the alternative to mitigate impacts on T&E species. The mitigation land would be placed under the management of the BLM to consolidate federal land ownership for conservation purposes. However, dust control measures and other measures restricting use of playas should reduce visual obscurities caused from fugitive dust generation.

All mitigation is considered feasible and likely to occur as proposed because Congress has authorized approximately \$75 million dollars for conservation actions in relation to the proposed project by virtue of Public Law 106-554, H.R. 5666, Section 323 (2001).

#### **4.9.6 Alternative VI: No Action**

##### **Federal/Public Lands**

Under Alternative VI, no withdrawal of additional public lands or acquisition of private land will occur. U.S. Army training will continue within the existing Fort Irwin boundaries that are currently permitted for training use pursuant to the existing biological opinion issued by the USFWS. The Army pursuant to the interim management plan, INRMP and ICRMP, would manage the withdrawn lands. No inconsistency with existing policies regulating BLM-administered lands or other adjacent land uses is anticipated; therefore, no significant impacts are expected.

##### **West Mojave Plan**

There are no lands within Alternative III that are within the CDCA and West Mojave Planning Area. Therefore, no significant impacts will occur.

##### **Multiple-Use Classifications, ACECs, and UPAs**

No impacts will occur.

##### **Livestock Grazing**

Alternative VI Contains 670 acres of the Cronese Lake grazing allotment, all of the inactive Goldstone sheep grazing allotment and a portion of the inactive Superior sheep grazing allotment. The loss of land to the Cronese Lake allotment is equal to 1.3 Animal Unit Months (AUM). No other year-round allotments are available on public lands adjacent to the leaseholder's ranch nor is it likely that any year-round cattle allotment will be made available on public lands within the southern California area. No significant impacts are expected.

### **State Lands**

State lands will remain under ownership by the SLC and/or other state agencies. No significant impacts are expected.

### **Private Lands**

Under Alternative VI, in-holdings within the congressionally withdrawn lands will remain under private ownership. Current county land use designations and zoning will also remain the same. No significant impacts are expected.

### **Mining**

Under Alternative VI, current mining activities on private parcels will remain. Impacts on mining uses for this and other alternatives are further discussed in Section 4.11, Mining.

### **Residential Uses**

Improved residential property within this alternative includes private land with one residential unit built on it. Use of this property will continue, as will free access by the network of paved and dirt roads subject to Army restrictions, if any, throughout the alternative. Existing private ownership will continue with restrictions on residency established by county zoning and land use designations. No significant impacts are expected.

### **Adjacent Land Uses**

Under Alternative VI, existing adjacent land uses are expected to remain the same. The lands in the surrounding region that are part of the CDCA will continue to be administered by the BLM. Private lands to the south and within the vicinity of the Silurian Valley will retain their current land use and zoning designations, as determined by San Bernardino County. Under this alternative, no conflicts with existing land use policies and designations are expected. No significant impacts will occur.

### **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**

There will be no change to the visual environment.

#### **4.9.7 Cumulative Impacts**

Over the past 100 years, the area in the ROI has been subjected to urban and commercial growth, agriculture, grazing, mining, recreation, OHV use, installation of utility lines, construction of roads and major interstate highways and creation of several large military installations. It has been estimated that 1 million acres may be developed in the next 30 years. Future development might be concentrated around existing cities. This development represents nearly all the private land available within the ROI.

At the same time, several resource conservation areas, State Parks, a National Park and a National Preserve have been created as well as ACECs, and wilderness areas. Additionally, new wilderness areas are currently proposed for creation in the California Wild Heritage Act of 2003. Depending upon the alternative chosen, mitigation for the proposed project could result in the purchase of private land in the vicinity of the ROI that would then be placed under federal management primarily for the conservation of sensitive species pursuant to the West Mojave Plan management prescriptions. The implementation of the West Mojave Plan also affects land use, as it will create several new ACECs and DWMA's and will restrict, or place conditions on, development and commercial activities such as mining and housing sub-divisions.

Due to the proposed purchase of land for mitigation to offset the impacts of the proposed project and the past Wildlands land purchases from Cattelus Corporation, land will have been taken out private ownership and transferred to the federal government. This, cumulatively, impacts the ability of persons to acquire land proposed to be purchased for private development. It is anticipated that future land transfers will occur from private to federal ownership, as the requirement to mitigate for impacts to endangered species will be a continuing obligation for those who wish to develop in the ROI.

Significant cumulative impacts may also occur to visual resources as more land is developed and disturbed throughout the ROI, the minor land form alternations and loss of vegetation, may cumulatively when combined with all past present and future actions result in significant loss of visibility and loss of natural vistas. The ROI has experienced significant alteration from its natural state and the proposed project is likely to add to this impact.

## **4.10 Recreation**

The proposed acquisition of additional lands by Fort Irwin has variable impacts on recreational uses relative to each alternative. This section addresses each recreational use, how it may be adversely affected by each alternative, and what the associated environmental consequences may be. Mitigation measures required to avoid or minimize the impacts are included as recommendations.

### **4.10.1 Significance Criteria**

Impacts to Recreation could be considered significant if the project significantly reduces the number of visitors currently using the area for camping, OHV use, rock hounding, fossil hunting, horseback riding, hunting, land sailing, or scenic viewing or bird watching.

### **4.10.2 Alternative I: East/West**

#### **4.10.2.1 Impacts**

#### **Recreation Areas**

##### *Recreation Areas in Study Area—Rainbow/Superior*

The northeastern most part of Rainbow/Superior comprises approximately 4,090 out of 171,000 acres and falls within the study area. Access to this area will be restricted. The loss of use of this area is not a significant impact due to the low number of visitors.