

FINAL REPORT
FORT IRWIN/NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER
PROPOSED LAND EXPANSION
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After a Land Use Requirements Study (LURS) completed in 1985 showed need for additional training area at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, the U.S. Army proposed an expansion onto acreage south, west and east of present NTC boundaries. For expansion to occur, public lands must be withdrawn from multiple use to military use, and private and state lands acquired.

Although private and state lands exist within the proposed extension area, the majority of lands are public, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Therefore, the BLM is the lead agency in administering the withdrawal processes. Final decision to withdraw land is made by Congress based upon a recommendation from the Secretary of the Interior. The decision criteria guiding the withdrawal process are based on a complex combination of laws, executive orders, acts, national and state guidelines and regulations of other agencies.

The withdrawal process was initiated by the Army's presentation of a land withdrawal application to BLM. In June 1988 BLM and the Army signed a Memorandum of Agreement for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the first stage in processing the withdrawal application for the proposed NTC expansion.

The BLM has contracted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) to undertake and manage the EIS process. The preliminary step in the EIS process is to determine the alternative and the issues. Based on existing data and using the guidelines set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), five alternatives, including the No Action alternative, have been developed.

In order to elicit concerns of private citizens, business organizations and groups which might be affected by the proposed withdrawal, six public scoping meetings were held in 1988 on the following dates:

September 12 - Riverside Holiday Inn - 1pm and 7pm
September 13 - San Bernardino County Board of Supv. - 7pm

September 14 - Victorville Green Tea Inn - 7pm
September 15 - Barstow Station Inn - 7pm
September 22 - Baker Community Hall - 7pm

Each meeting was chaired by a BLM spokesperson, a presentation was made by an Army spokesman, and consultants responsible for preparation of the EIS were available to respond to inquiries. Approximately 250 people, excluding consultants and presenters, attended the public meetings. Approximately 100 persons voiced their concerns at the meetings; several hundred more telephoned or have written to the BLM Project Manager, Karla Swanson.

Many concerns were raised, most clustering around environmental issues (habitat loss, endangered flora and fauna, degradation of air and water quality), concern for private property (loss of actual property, rights of private property owners, adequate compensation), and loss of access to public lands (for various recreation use, economic benefits, aesthetic reasons.)

Study of these issues is underway and the data gathered will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Study scheduled to be available to the public in March 1989. The body of this document provides more detailed information concerning the Background (Part II), Public Scoping Meetings (Part III), Ranking of Issues (Part IV), and in the appendices, copies of the current mailing list, materials mailed/handed to the public, issues ranking forms and consultants, advisors and contractors.

Further information concerning this project may be obtained from:

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