

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

May 6, 2003

Colonel James R. Uken, Director
56th Range Management Office
U.S. Air Force
ATTN: Captain Stephanie Dawley
P.O. Box 67132
Phoenix, AZ 85082

Dear Colonel Uken:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the **Barry M. Goldwater Range Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP), Yuma, Pima and Maricopa Counties, Arizona** (CEQ #030079. #D-UAF-K11109-AZ). EPA's review is conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Federal lead agencies in preparing the DEIS are the Departments of the Air Force, the Navy, and the Interior. The Arizona Department of Game and Fish is a cooperating agency.

The Goldwater Range, a major military installation covering 2,709 square miles, is used by the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Marine Corps and other aviation components of the military for training. The range comprises the largest remaining tract of Sonoran Desert in the United States. The DEIS was prepared to facilitate development of an INRMP for the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources; sustainable multi-purpose use of its resources; and public access. In addition to No Action (Management Strategy A), the DEIS fully evaluates three action alternatives for managing the range's natural resources. Management Strategy C is the proposed action.

EPA rates the DEIS and Proposed Action as **LO - Lack of Objections**. Please refer to the attached '*Summary of Rating Definitions*' for a detailed explanation of EPA's rating system. While the DEIS addresses key environmental issues in a clear manner, we recommend adopting an additional mitigation measure to reduce adverse impacts to water resources. Page S-19 states that Management Strategy B provides the greatest degree of motorized access to the range and allows driving in designated dry washes.

For each of the alternatives, we recommend that recreational driving in dry washes be restricted to the extent possible to ensure the protection of water quality and beneficial uses from adverse effects. Adverse effects include increased erosion and sedimentation, and the discharge of hydrocarbons (fuels, oils, greases) from recreational vehicles. EPA recommends that the Final

EIS (FEIS) and Record of Decision address the feasibility of mitigation to restrict or prohibit recreational driving in dry washes. The FEIS should also address the extent to which recreational driving in dry washes is consistent with State-adopted, EPA-approved water quality standards and Section 313 of the Clean Water Act.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the DEIS. Please send one copy of the FEIS to this office at the letterhead address (mailcode: CMD-2) when it is released. If you have any questions concerning EPA's comments, please contact my staff reviewer for this project, David Tomsovic, at 415-972-3858 or by electronic mail at <tomsovic.david@epa.gov>.

Sincerely,

//original signed by//

Lisa B. Hanf, Manager
Federal Activities Office

Attachment: 1
'Summary of Rating Definitions'