

**CHOCOLATE MOUNTAIN AERIAL GUNNERY RANGE  
DRAFT LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOR THE PROPOSED RENEWAL OF THE LAND WITHDRAWAL**

**FINAL SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT**

*Prepared for:*  
**U.S. Marine Corps**

**March 2011**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAGR	Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range
CMLWOA	California Military Lands Withdrawal and Overflights Act of 1994
CVWD	Coachella Valley Water District
DoI	Department of the Interior
DoN	Department of the Navy
EMLF	Eagle Mountain Landfill
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
LEIS	Legislative Environmental Impact Statement
MCAS	Marine Corps Air Station
MCI WEST	Marine Corps Installations WEST
MCO	Marine Corps Order
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
SUA	Special Use Airspace
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

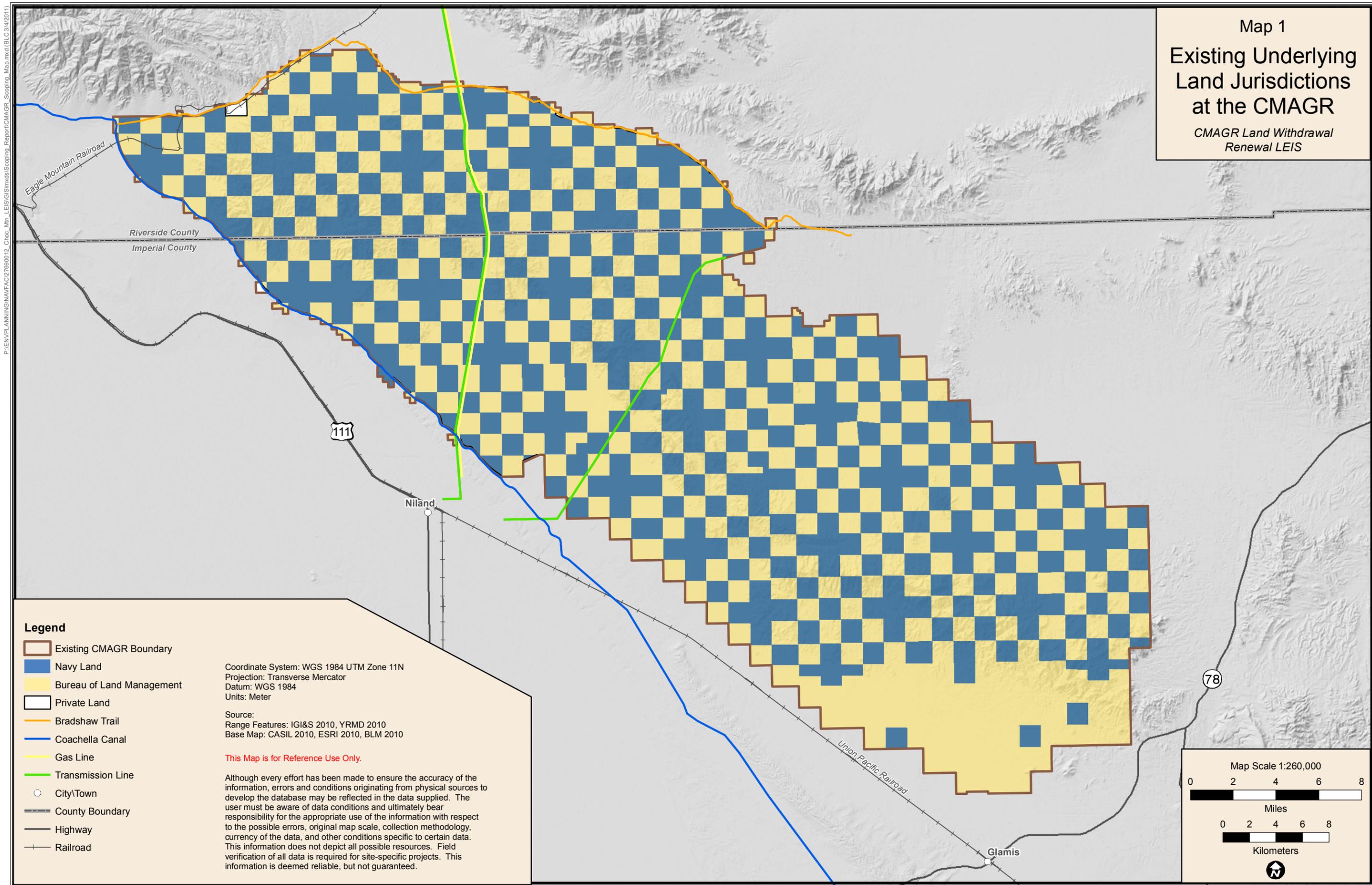
## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The Department of the Navy (DoN) is preparing a Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, to evaluate potential environmental effects of the proposed renewal of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) land withdrawal. The CMAGR is a live-fire aviation training range that was initially established during World War II and has supported tactical military aviation training ever since. It is located to the east of the Salton Sea in Imperial and Riverside counties, California. The CMAGR provides more than 700 square miles of land and several thousands of square miles of overlying and adjacent Special Use Airspace (SUA) that continues to support training that is essential to the readiness of the nation's Marine Corps and Naval air forces.

The CMAGR supports training in air combat maneuvering and tactics; close air support (where air-to-ground ordnance is fired to directly support friendly forces engaged in ground combat); airborne laser system operations; air-to-air gunnery; and air-to-ground bombing, rocketry, and strafing. Artillery, demolitions, small arms, and naval special warfare training are also conducted within the range. The CMAGR is a centerpiece in the much larger Bob Stump Training Range Complex that incorporates adjacent and nearby SUA and ranges in California and Arizona to support full-spectrum combat operations so that Marines can realistically train as they will fight. The current withdrawal of Department of the Interior (DoI) public lands for the CMAGR, established through the California Military Lands Withdrawal and Overflight Act of 1994 (CMLWOA), is scheduled to expire in October 2014. There continues to be a military need for the CMAGR so the DoN is initiating the process to request that Congress renew the land withdrawal and military reservation.

To initiate this process, the DoN filed a land withdrawal application with the Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for public lands currently within the CMAGR as well as for some adjacent lands being considered to establish a more effective and identifiable range boundary. Land jurisdiction at the CMAGR resembles a checkerboard where roughly every other section (640 acres or approximately 1 square mile) falls under either DoN or DoI jurisdiction. About 232,116 acres of the checkerboard are Navy lands while the alternate sections (approximately 226,711 acres) are withdrawn DoI public lands managed by the BLM (see Map 1). The withdrawal application triggers a temporary segregation of the affected lands from settlement, sale, location, or entry under some or all of the public land, mining, and mineral laws to allow time for the land withdrawal issue to be decided. Congressional approval is required for land withdrawals for national defense purposes that total more than 5,000 acres in aggregate.

Map 1  
 Existing Underlying  
 Land Jurisdictions  
 at the CMAGR  
 CMAGR Land Withdrawal  
 Renewal LEIS



**Legend**

- Existing CMAGR Boundary
- Navy Land
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private Land
- Bradshaw Trail
- Coachella Canal
- Gas Line
- Transmission Line
- City/Town
- County Boundary
- Highway
- Railroad

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 11N  
 Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Datum: WGS 1984  
 Units: Meter  
 Source:  
 Range Features: IGI&S 2010, YRMD 2010  
 Base Map: CASIL 2010, ESRI 2010, BLM 2010

**This Map is for Reference Use Only.**

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, errors and conditions originating from physical sources to develop the database may be reflected in the data supplied. The user must be aware of data conditions and ultimately bear responsibility for the appropriate use of the information with respect to the possible errors, original map scale, collection methodology, currency of the data, and other conditions specific to certain data. This information does not depict all possible resources. Field verification of all data is required for site-specific projects. This information is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

Map Scale 1:260,000

0 2 4 6 8  
 Miles

0 2 4 6 8  
 Kilometers

Concurrently with the withdrawal application, the DoN began the NEPA process to assess the environmental impacts associated with the land withdrawal alternatives. The BLM will serve as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the NEPA documentation. One of the first steps of the NEPA process for the withdrawal was to initiate scoping, which is “an early and open process for determining the issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to proposed action” (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 1501.7). During scoping, DoN actively seeks to engage potentially affected or interested Federal, State, and local agencies; American Indian tribes; and the public. Scoping for the LEIS commenced on 24 September 2010, with publication of a notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an LEIS in the *Federal Register*, Volume 75, No. 185 (Appendix A), and concluded on 23 December 2010. This report is a summary of the scoping process and results.

## **1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED**

The fundamental purpose of keeping the CMAGR fully in service beyond October 2014 is to preserve a component of the national defense training base that is indispensable to the continued and future readiness of Marine Corps and Navy air forces. Although military aircraft, weapons systems, and tactics have advanced and changed markedly since the 1940s, the CMAGR continues to be a critical military training asset and is expected to be used to support new aircraft including the MV-22 (also known as the Osprey) and the F-35 (also known as the Joint Strike Fighter). In addition, the CMAGR supports air combat training needed by Air Force, Army, National Guard, and land-based training by Navy special warfare units.

Extending the land withdrawal will provide for the continued effective implementation of ongoing aircrew training while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to the training needs of new technologies as they develop. The performance of air operations in combat is directly related to the quality and depth of training. The CMAGR provides a unique combination of attributes that serve this training requirement, including the proximity to existing air stations, favorable flying weather, sufficient land and airspace, diverse terrain, and developed training support facilities.

Because the CMAGR comprises DoN lands and BLM-managed public lands, environmental stewardship for the CMAGR is implemented through the Sikes Act for DoN land and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) for BLM land. The management goals and procedures of these acts differ, so two separate regulatory schemes are required to administer the checkerboard land jurisdiction pattern of the range. Currently, DoN has full administrative jurisdiction to manage military training and resource management on DoN lands within the CMAGR, and the BLM is responsible for resource management on the alternating sections of public lands withdrawn and reserved for DoN use.

## **1.3 PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES**

A range of alternatives will be considered in the LEIS. In addition to the no-action alternative required under NEPA, four preliminary action alternatives were developed by the DoN. Scoping comments may result in revisions to these preliminary alternatives or the addition of new alternatives. Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include restructuring the CMAGR boundary to more closely follow, but not cross or

incorporate, certain prominent geographic features, such as the Bradshaw Trail and Coachella Canal. Benefits of a realigned boundary include enhanced safety through a better demarked boundary and improved range and land management effectiveness.

The checkerboard pattern of DoN and DoI lands (see Map 1), coupled with guidance from the CMLWOA, creates divided jurisdictions and management responsibilities for these agencies at the CMAGR. The joint management scheme leaves the DoN and the DoI with a divided set of jurisdictions and responsibilities. As a consequence, management of the natural and cultural resources of the range has not been comprehensively planned, integrated, or implemented. The Draft LEIS will explore land management alternatives, including maintaining the status quo of split management versus transferring all natural and cultural resource management responsibilities to the DoN. The preliminary alternatives presented to the public during scoping were refined based on public scoping comments.

- 1) Alternative 1 would renew the current withdrawal for another 20 years, with no boundary or jurisdictional changes.
- 2) Alternative 2 would renew the land withdrawal for another 25 years, partially realign the boundary to conform to certain geographical features, and allocate full administrative jurisdiction for resource management to DoN.
- 3) Alternative 3 would also renew the land withdrawal and realign the range boundary as described for Alternative 2. Alternative 3, however, would permanently transfer all custody and accountability for the real property within both the current withdrawal and the restructured boundaries for DoI public lands to DoN, which would have the effect of eliminating the checkerboard of DoI and DoN land jurisdictions and consolidating all management responsibilities for the CMAGR under the DoN.
- 4) Alternative 4 would renew the land withdrawal for another 25 years and realign the range boundary as described for Alternative 2; however, land jurisdiction and management responsibilities would remain unchanged from the current condition.
- 5) Under Alternative 5, the no-action alternative, the existing land withdrawal for the CMAGR, provided by the CMLOWA of 1994, would expire at the end of October 2014. The capability to support existing and future training activities at the CMAGR that rely on these lands would cease. No alternative range in the operational region of the CMAGR currently has the weapons training capacity to absorb the training missions assigned to the CMAGR. Consequently, other ranges in the operational region would have to be redeveloped to support CMAGR training, training would be moved to other regions, or training would be curtailed. Range clean-up operations at CMAGR would be required. The No Action Alternative does not meet the Marine Corps needs but is a required element of the LEIS.

## 2.0 SCOPING PROCESS

This section provides a summary of the objectives of scoping and a description of the scoping process and agency coordination for the proposed renewal of the CMAGR land withdrawal LEIS.

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the scoping process include:

- Coordinate with affected Federal, State, and local agencies, affected American Indian tribes, and other interested parties to:
  - Invite agencies to participate as cooperating agencies in the LEIS process
  - Establish a process to integrate and expedite environmental reviews
  - Establish the planning and decision-making schedule
- Determine the scope of the analysis, significant issues to be analyzed in detail in the LEIS, insignificant issues for which detailed analysis is not warranted, and the range of alternatives and impacts.
- Identify:
  - Issues that have been covered by prior environmental review and can be eliminated from detailed study
  - Cumulative actions and environmental assessments or environmental impact statements that are being or will be prepared that are related to but are not part of the scope of the LEIS under consideration
  - Other environmental review and consultation requirements (e.g., Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act) so the required analyses and studies can be prepared and integrated with the LEIS

### 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOPING PROCESS

Methods used to involve the public and facilitate exchange of updated project information throughout the planning process have included various types of announcements, agency and tribal coordination, and public scoping meetings.

#### 2.2.1 Announcements

##### 2.2.1.1 Government Leader Briefing

In September 2010, selected Congressional leaders were notified by letter that the Marine Corps planned to file a NOI to prepare an LEIS for renewal of the CMAGR land withdrawal. Government leaders in Sacramento, California were briefed by Marine Corps Installations West (MCI WEST) on military

activities within the region and were provided with a short fact sheet about the proposed renewal action at the CMAGR (Appendix A).

### 2.2.1.2 Notice of Intent

The public was notified of the intent to prepare a Draft LEIS and the dates and locations of scoping meetings through the NOI published in the *Federal Register* on 24 September 2010 (Appendix A). The NOI also provided project information including a description of the purpose and need, the preliminary alternatives, environmental issues and resources to be examined, information on how to submit comments, the DoN contact information, and highlights about other opportunities for public input in the LEIS process.

### 2.2.1.3 Newsletter

A newsletter was distributed to approximately 281 people on 18 November 2010 to notify government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties of the intent to prepare an LEIS and the scoping process (Appendix A). The newsletter mailing list included private property owners whose land could be affected by the boundary realignment proposed by Alternatives 2, 3, or 4; local elected or municipal officials; Federal and State agencies; potentially interested American Indian tribes; and other interested parties.

The mailing list for future newsletters will be supplemented throughout the process as people notify the DoN of their interest in the project through direct requests to the DoN, participation in public meetings, or submission of comments.

### 2.2.1.4 Paid Advertisement

The public also was notified of the scoping meetings through paid advertisements published in newspapers local to the scoping meeting locations or the CMAGR as well as some of the communities near military installations that use the CMAGR for training. Table 1 lists the newspapers, publication area, and dates of publication.

**Table 1 Newspaper Publication of Paid Advertisement**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Publication Area</b>	<b>Dates of Publication</b>
<i>Yuma Sun</i>	Arizona areas: Yuma, Somerton, San Luis, Gadsden, Roll, Dateland, Wellton, and Tacna California areas: Winterhaven	14-16 November 2010 28-30 November 2010
<i>Baja Del Sol</i>	Yuma County, Arizona Spanish Language Newspaper	19 November 2010 26 November 2010 03 December 2010
<i>Desert Warrior</i>	Marine Corps Air Station Yuma	18 November 2010 24 November 2010 02 December 2010
<i>Imperial Valley Press</i>	Imperial Valley California – specifically: Mexicali, Baja, San Diego County; and Yuma, Arizona	16-18 November 2010 30 November 2010 01-02 December 2010

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Publication Area</b>	<b>Dates of Publication</b>
<i>Palo Verde Valley Times</i>	Blythe, California and Quartzsite, Arizona	17 November 2010 19 November 2010 01 December 2010 03 December 2010
<i>Desert Sun</i>	Palm Springs, California	16-18 November 2010 30 November 2010 01-02 December 2010
<i>Union Tribune</i>	San Diego County, California	15-17 November 2010 29-30 November 2010 01 December 2010

A camera-ready version of the advertisement is included in Appendix A.

### **2.2.1.5 Website**

The public website for the project, located at: [www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com](http://www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com), offers interested parties online information pertaining to the project background, preliminary alternatives, published documents, maps, and the LEIS schedule. Materials available at the public scoping meetings are available on the “Documents and Maps” page. This website is designed to encourage participation by offering online comment submissions and the option to be added to the mailing list; both located under the “Get Involved” page.

## **2.2.2 Agency and Tribal Coordination**

### **2.2.2.1 Cooperating Agencies**

The BLM is serving as a cooperating agency for the preparation of the Draft LEIS. Ongoing coordination with BLM has occurred through the land withdrawal application process. The Bureau of Reclamation has indicated that it has jurisdiction for lands along the Coachella Canal and has been invited to serve as a cooperating agency.

### **2.2.2.2 Agency and Tribal Coordination and Consultation**

In addition to sending the newsletter to agency and tribal representatives, notification letters were mailed to 49 agencies and 38 tribes expected to have an interest in the land withdrawal renewal or a regulatory review responsibility. In some cases, multiple persons within an agency or tribe received the letter so more than 100 notification letters were sent. The letter invited scoping comments and provided information on who to contact to request additional information or arrange for a meeting with project team representatives.

Follow-up telephone calls were made to the American Indian tribes on 22 December 2010 in effort to assure they were aware of the LEIS activities and their opportunity to offer scoping comments, and to inquire if they needed additional information.

A sample of the coordination letters and a summary of the follow-up contacts with the tribes are included in Appendix B.

### 2.2.3 Public Scoping Meetings

Four public scoping meetings were held in an open house format to provide information to the public and request public input. Each open house began at 5:30 p.m. and continued until 8:00 p.m. Attendees were invited to register their attendance and each person was given a handout of Frequently Asked Questions and a comment form. Eight display boards were used to illustrate information, including the vicinity of the CMAGR, Federal land withdrawal and NEPA processes, military ranges in the operating region and how they are used, military features of the CMAGR, current land jurisdiction, proposed CMAGR boundary realignments, summary of preliminary alternatives, and LEIS study topics. Attendees could browse the information on the boards and speak informally to representatives from the project team.

Questions and comments were discussed through one-on-one conversations between attendees and project team representatives during the open house. Attendees were invited to offer oral comments to a court reporter who recorded them verbatim. Transcripts of these comments were reviewed in conjunction with written comments to ensure that all issues were identified in this report (as discussed in Section 3.0). Comment forms were available at each meeting for attendees to provide written comments at the time of the meeting, or to return by mail. Locations, dates, and attendance of each public meeting are shown in Table 2. Copies of scoping meeting materials are provided in Appendix C.

**Table 2 Public Scoping Meeting Attendance**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Yuma, Arizona – Yuma County Library 2951 S 21 <sup>st</sup> Drive; Rooms B-C Yuma, AZ 85364	06 December 2010	7
El Centro, CA – Holiday Inn Express 350 Smoketree Drive El Centro, CA 92243	07 December 2010	15
Palm Springs, CA – Holiday Inn 1800 E Palm Canyon Palm Springs, CA 92264	08 December 2010	2
San Diego, CA – San Diego Planning Commission Hearing Room 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B San Diego, CA 92123	09 December 2010	11
Total attendance at scoping meetings		35

## **3.0 SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section provides a summary of the method used to organize and analyze comments; a quantification of how many comments were received; how many issues were identified within those comments; and the issues identified during scoping. Although the DoN will continue to consider comments throughout the LEIS process, the scoping comments documented in this report were received during the formal scoping period that ended 23 December 2010.

Comments regarding the proposed action alternatives will be considered by the DoN in refining the project description and alternatives that will serve as the basis for the impact assessment. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA requires agencies to identify alternative ways of meeting their need for the action. Chapter 2 of the LEIS will describe the alternatives to be analyzed and the alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for detailed analysis in the LEIS.

The (CEQ) regulations also require an analysis of the impacts of a proposed action on the environment. These impacts include effects on natural, human, and cultural resources. Discussions with affected public or agencies, such as those that have occurred through this scoping effort, help to define and evaluate effects of the different alternatives on the environment. Comments relating to environmental impacts will be considered by the DoN in developing the scope of LEIS technical studies. Chapters 3 (Affected Environment) and 4 (Environmental Consequences) of the LEIS will address the resource issues identified during scoping. Concerns about the LEIS studies and decision-making processes will be considered in refining and modifying these processes throughout the remainder of the LEIS preparation.

Some public comments may be considered outside the scope of this LEIS if the issue does not pertain to this project, is not within the jurisdiction of the DoN to resolve, cannot be reasonably addressed within the scope of this process or is being addressed through a separate NEPA process, or does not satisfy the project's purpose and need. Those issues that are considered to be outside the scope of the LEIS are identified by issue or resource under Section 3.6.

### **3.2 COMMENT ORGANIZATION**

Mailed letters, electronic (e-) mail messages, project website submittals through 23 December 2010, and comment forms received at each scoping meeting, were reviewed, documented, and entered into a database to facilitate organization, sorting, analytical review, and management of the comments in several different ways. The database is structured to organize comments into separate issue categories, identify the type (e.g., letter, e-mail, comment form), and source of submittal (e.g., agency, special interest group, citizen), and tally the number of comments using various combinations of identifiers.

Using the experience and professional judgment of the study team, the comments were organized into 17 major issue categories; on a broad scale, the categories pertain to process, purpose and need, alternatives, and environmental impacts.

**Process:** Process comments regarding the methods used to implement NEPA and the process associated with the segregation of public lands to be considered as part of the land withdrawal.

**Purpose and Need:** Comments regarding the purpose and need identified that lands proposed for inclusion in the withdrawal be clearly justified.

**Alternatives:** Most comments about the preliminary alternatives included suggestions for and concerns about alternative boundary realignments, but there were also comments indicating support for or opposition to some of the preliminary alternatives.

**Environmental Impacts:** Comments addressed the need to evaluate the potential impacts of the land withdrawal renewal on natural, human, and cultural resources, and about social and economic concerns. Topic categories include:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazardous Materials and Safety
- Land Use, Recreation, and Access
- Socioeconomics
- Water Resources

### 3.3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A total of 26 comment submissions received from 22 persons were entered into the project database; some persons submitted more than one letter or commented using more than one media (such as a comment form at a meeting and a letter). Comments were parsed from the letters and other submissions into 17 main categories of issues, and subcategories when appropriate. For example, a comment regarding the effects on public recreation was categorized as Public Use with a sub issue assignment of Recreation. This organization allows the project team to identify, quantify, and analyze public concerns for this Scoping Report and for resource specialists to use in preparing the LEIS. It also allowed team members to identify issues at a very detailed level while maintaining the context of each comment. If a comment mentioned multiple issues, it was separated into single comments and categorized according to the individual issue. These comments and issues are summarized in Section 3.4 along with a sample of representative quotations.

Within the 26 comment submissions entered into the database, some individuals offered only a single comment, while others provided several comments related to a single or multiple categories. Due to submissions containing multiple comments, more than 75 issues were identified and categorized. Table 3 summarizes the volume of comments received on each of the main issue categories.

**Table 3 Summary of Total Issues Identified**

<b>Main Issue</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>Percent Based on Total Number of Comments</b>
Agency Coordination	2	2.6%
Airspace	1	1.3%
Alternatives	30	39.0%
Biological Resources	2	2.6%
Cultural Resources	2	2.6%
Cumulative Effects	1	1.3%
Hazardous Materials	3	3.9%
Land Use	7	9.1%
Military Use	2	2.6%
Miscellaneous	1	1.3%
Process (including NEPA and Segregation)	4	5.2%
Purpose & Need	1	1.3%
Public Use (including Recreation and Access)	12	15.6%
Resource Management	2	2.6%
Safety	4	5.2%
Socioeconomics	1	1.3%
Water	2	2.6%
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>

As noted in Table 3, Alternatives was the most frequently mentioned main issue, accounting for 39 percent of all comments received. Within this category, more than half of the comments identified suggestions for other alternatives to consider or variations on the preliminary alternatives. The second most frequently mentioned issue was Public Use, which included comments regarding recreation and access.

Although quantifying comments and issues is helpful in summarizing comments for public review and helping to guide future LEIS studies, it is important to note that the level of importance of comments to the decision-making process is not influenced by the frequency of a specific issue. In some cases, for example, a person may have submitted more than one letter or mentioned the same issue several times in their letter; therefore, his or her issues may have been recorded several times. In contrast, if only one comment was made about a certain issue, it will have the same level of importance as any other comment.

### **3.4 ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING SCOPING**

NEPA requires Federal agencies to focus their analysis and documentation on the important issues related to a proposed action. These issues serve as the basis for developing and comparing alternatives. The following section provides a summary of the key issues identified during scoping, including a sample of

representative quotations from the comment submissions. These issues will be considered and analyzed in the LEIS. Those issues that will not be addressed in the LEIS are identified under Section 3.6.

### **3.4.1 Project Alternatives**

Most of the comments received on project alternatives concerned the proposed boundary realignments. Other comments provided support for continuing military use of the CMAGR, requested clarification of agency responsibilities for resource management, and suggested a shorter duration for the proposed withdrawal period.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “May I suggest that you look at the existing Southern boundary and consider extending it in a Westerly direction up to the [Union Pacific] railroad easement with no further alignment to the South.”
- “The land in the immediate vicinity of the training dikes should be withdrawn from the gunnery range and bombing activity eliminated to allow [U.S. Bureau of Reclamation/Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)] to maintain these dikes.”
- “Boundary realignment to follow the railroad right-of-way would further enhance public safety by providing for very clear boundary demarcation.”
- “[T]he Sanitation Districts [of Los Angeles County] request that the CMAGR expansion alternatives evaluated in the Draft L-EIS be modified so that they do not overlap the [Mesquite Regional Landfill] Rail Spur [right of way].”
- “I support the US Marine Corps’ renewal of this withdrawal.”
- “I support one agency (USMC) being the primary overseer of natural and cultural resource management within the area.”
- “In a changing climate, and in support of effective stewardship, this assessment should occur more frequently than 25-year cycles.”
- “Modify the suggested boundary adjustment to the CMAGR to exclude the Eagle Mountain Railroad.”
- “I suggest full transfer of all right, title and interest to DoN and to keep the range open”

### **3.4.2 Biological Resources**

Comments related to biological resources focused on threatened and endangered species and specifically protection of species and their habitat.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “The DLEIS should discuss how the different management alternatives would likely impact the management and protection of the Mojave Desert Tortoise.”

- “Sanitation Districts [of Los Angeles County] request that the current [Mesquite Regional Landfill] biological compliance programs (tortoise crossings and biological monitoring) remain unchanged.”

### **3.4.3 Cultural Resources**

A Tribe expressed interest in participating in the LEIS process with regard to survey and analysis of cultural resources.

- “The THPO [Tribal Historic Preservation Office] is concerned in regards to potential impacts to historic and natural resources and would like to participate in consultation regarding the Renewal of the Chocolate Mountain...”
- “...we have the following recommendations for the protection of resources: 1. The development of a Historic Preservation Management Plan in consultation with Tribes.”
- “...we request the following: 5. Approved Native American Cultural Resource Monitor(s) be present during all ground disturbing activities.”

### **3.4.4 Hazardous Materials**

Evaluation of contamination and the responsibility for clean-up were main topics under this category.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “The DLEIS should thoroughly discuss the liability and responsibilities for contamination cleanup once the range is no longer being utilized. ... The alternatives analysis should evaluate the effectiveness, and financial and other capabilities of BLM versus DoN in carrying out the cleanup.”

### **3.4.5 Land Use**

Of the comments submitted in this category, the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County and the Bureau of Reclamation provided substantive input.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “...the Sanitation Districts also request that the CMAGR be modified along its northwest boundary to remain south and east of the existing Eagle Mountain Railroad... The Sanitation Districts have entered into an agreement to purchase the Eagle Mountain Landfill (EMLF), including the railroad. The railroad and unhindered rail access are a critical part of the EMLF project.”
- “Address impacts to energy development and transmission.”
- “...any Alternative selected in the draft LEIS must allow full access to CVWD for continued operation and maintenance of all Canal facilities in the area.”

### 3.4.6 Military Use

Comments related to Military Use were provided by agencies who share access to land in the withdrawn area.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “CVWD requests that military vehicles be prohibited from using the Canal roads except in defined limited locations for access to the Gunnery Range.”
- “The DLEIS should clearly indicate whether the level of training will increase, decrease, or remain the same under the different alternatives.”

### 3.4.7 Public Use: Recreation/Access

Most comments in this category regarded public use of existing BLM routes for recreation and off-road transportation, but comments also pertained to access for facilities in the area. More than 15 percent of all comments received fit this category and most of the comments were submitted by individuals who recreate in the area and desire to continue safe access to the designated routes. Additionally, access to the Mary Lode Mine was requested.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “CVWD needs to be able to access these facilities to ensure that the dikes can withstand a large flood to protect the canal and downstream property from severe flooding.”
- “In compliance with the MRL [Mesquite Regional Landfill] Conditional Use Permit (CUP No. 1036-91), the Sanitation Districts provided three at-grade crossings to facilitate public and military access to areas north and west of the MRL Rail Spur at BLM roads numbers 670006, 670607, and 670604 that correspond to an Imperial County Public Works Gravel Pit, CP Bull Road, and old Highway 78, respectively. These at-grade crossings are also regulated by the CPUC [California Public Utilities Commission] as Crossing Numbers 00IB-1.11-C, 001B-1.91-C, and 00IB-2.63-C, respectively. These routes connect the public on Hwy 78 with BLM lands on the other side of the MRL Rail Spur. Any changes to these public access routes will require appropriate modifications to the MRL Rail Spur and associated CPUC permits and UPRR [Union Pacific Railroad] agreements.”
- “My family uses the area near the BLM roads 606, 607, and 590 for recreation ...”
- “...it is also important to have the Bradshaw trail open for public use.”
- “Mine owners request right to access the Mary Lode Mine land for the possibility of activating it.” (Note: The *BLM Mining Claim Geographic Index Report*, dated 18 Feb 2011, indicates this claim was closed on 1 Feb 1985.)

### **3.4.8 Water Resource Impacts**

Concerns about groundwater quality and watershed impacts were noted.

#### *Representative Quotations*

- “Discuss groundwater quality and indicate whether there is evidence that groundwater is becoming contaminated with munitions constituents.”
- “The Sanitation District requests that watersheds upgradient of the MRL site remain unchanged.”

### **3.5 ISSUES REGARDING LAND WITHDRAWAL SEGREGATION**

Public notification materials also invited the public to comment on the land withdrawal application and the land segregation process. No comments specifically fit this category, but comments regarding the segregation process stated that BLM should issue a Notice of Segregation and hold one or more public meetings on this issue unless the NEPA scoping meetings were also held to comply with BLM’s procedural responsibilities.

### **3.6 ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE LEIS**

Some suggestions may be considered outside of the scope of this LEIS if the issue relates to facilities or a purpose and need that is not included in or defined for this project, is not within the jurisdiction of DoN to resolve, cannot be reasonably addressed within the scope of this process, or is being addressed through a separate NEPA process. Additionally, comments that offer opinions or position statements that are not based on anticipated environmental effects are not considered substantive and will not be addressed in the LEIS. The following selection of scoping comments is considered outside the scope of the LEIS and will not be addressed.

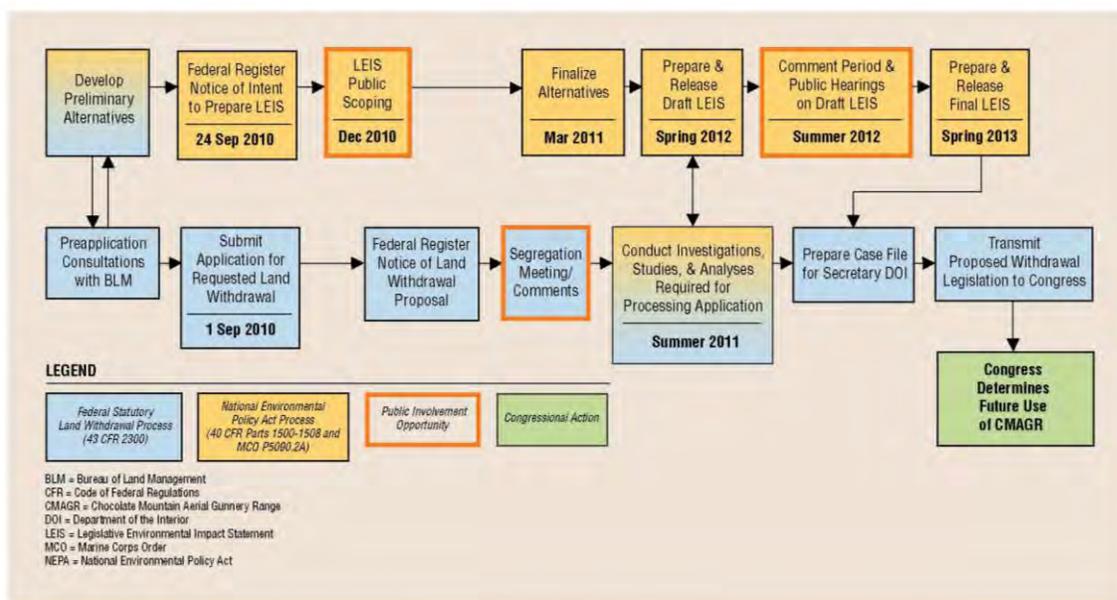
Comments stating that the ownership and management actions at Glamis North KOA (also known as Imperial Hot Mineral Spa) are unsatisfactory, or that the Marines ought to say that there should not be an all-terrain vehicle park near the CMAGR are not germane to the proposed action, and therefore not included in the LEIS analysis.

Some comments pertain to special use designations, such as designated wilderness beyond the CMAGR boundaries. An example is: “I’m concerned about all the desert closures; especially what Senator Feinstein wants to do. All the fee areas, that’s just another form of taxation.” The comments are beyond the jurisdiction of DoN authority.

## 4.0 SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE LEIS PROCESS

The LEIS process requires a team of interdisciplinary resource specialists to prepare and review the analysis combined with additional opportunities for public input. An important part of the DoN planning process is engaging the public and relevant agencies from the earliest stages of and throughout the planning process to address issues, comments, and concerns. The steps of the planning process and agency authority and decisions to be made are described below; Figure 1 provides a summary of the LEIS process and schedule, and how this process correlates with the land withdrawal process.

**Figure 1 LEIS Process Flow Chart**



Federal Land Withdrawal and NEPA Processes for Renewal of the CMAGR  
 CMAGR Land Withdrawal  
 Renewal LEIS

### 4.1 PUBLIC SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Issues were identified through the scoping process, which initiated the NEPA planning process. The scoping period and the issues identified are documented in this Scoping Report, which is also available on the Project website ([www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com](http://www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com)).

### 4.2 FORMULATE ALTERNATIVES

The DoN and the Marine Corps conducted an evaluation of the actions that would satisfy the purpose of and need for the renewal of the land withdrawal and actions that might enhance range management and operations in the future. Preliminary alternatives were developed through this evaluation and were shared with the public during scoping so the public could offer comments. Several of the scoping comments indicated support for or opposition to the preliminary alternatives and several other scoping comments

offered suggestions to revise the preliminary alternatives or to consider additional alternatives. This input will be considered in the formulations of the alternatives that will be analyzed in the Draft LEIS.

### **4.3 PREPARE AND RELEASE DRAFT LEIS**

#### **4.3.1 Data Collection and Data Gaps**

Much of the data and information, which form the baseline resource inventory, will be compiled and used from existing data on file at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma, DoN offices, BLM El Centro and Palm Springs field offices, or through other local agencies. The public also is encouraged to provide any data or data sources that may be relevant to or assist with the EIS analysis.

Data include published and unpublished reports, maps, and digital format files used in a geographic information system (GIS). Some of the data gaps identified during scoping regarded topics that were already expected to be addressed in the LEIS analysis. To help complete the analysis, the project team may conduct field surveys to verify local conditions and data collected from existing sources.

#### **4.3.2 Assess Impacts**

The resources and resource uses to be addressed include the following:

- Biological resources
- Cultural resources
- Geology, soils, and mineral potential
- Ground- and surface-water resources
- Noise
- Air quality
- Safety
- Hazardous materials and waste
- Social and economic conditions
- Environmental justice

The impacts that could result from implementing the alternatives will be analyzed. Where applicable, measures to mitigate those impacts will be identified.

### **4.4 PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT LEIS**

A summary of the scoping process, data collection efforts, and the findings of the impact assessment will be documented in a Draft LEIS. The Draft LEIS will be made available for public review, which is currently expected to be in Spring 2012. The availability of the Draft LEIS will be announced in the

*Federal Register* and advertised in local media. Public comments will be accepted for a minimum of 90 days, during which time public meetings will be held to receive comments on the Draft LEIS.

#### **4.5 PREPARE FINAL LEIS**

DoN will review comments received on the Draft LEIS and prepare responses to each. The LEIS may or may not be modified based on public comments; however, comments and responses will be incorporated into the Final LEIS.

The Final LEIS also will be made available for the public to review and is estimated to be available in Spring 2013. The availability of the Final LEIS will be announced in the *Federal Register* and advertised in local media.

**APPENDIX A**  
**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Notice of Intent  
Government Officials Briefing Brochure  
Newsletter  
Interested Parties Distribution List  
Newspaper Advertisement

properties. USACE Detroit District, and Wayne County, MI acting as the non-federal sponsor, have formed a partnership to reevaluate the flooding issues along the NBEC. The GRR/EIS, will update a feasibility study and EIS completed by USACE in 1988. The purpose of this GRR/EIS is reanalysis of the federal interest in developing flood risk management measures on the NBEC. The analysis will include reformulation of the authorized plan from the 1988 study for applicability. The GRR/EIS will incorporate a review of developments in the floodplain during the last 22 years, consideration of changing needs of the local communities, and current environmental conditions. When complete, the GRR/EIS will recommend if flood mitigation measures should occur with federal assistance. Federal funding for the GRR/EIS phase originates from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, which requires the GRR/EIS to be developed on an accelerated schedule.

**Project Authority:** The GRR/EIS is being completed based on authorization by Section 102 of the River and Harbor Act of 1966 (Pub. L. 89-789). The original study *Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement for Flood Protection in the Ecorse Creek Drainage Basin, Wayne County, Michigan, 1987 (Revised 1988)* recommended the development of a retention basin as the selected plan. Construction of the selected plan from the 1988 feasibility study was further authorized by Section 101(a) (14) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1990. Construction never occurred. Project authorization was extended in Section 3179 of the WRDA of 2007 to conduct the GRR.

**Project Alternatives:** A number of flood risk management alternatives will be evaluated as part of the GRR/EIS including retention basins, stream widening and restoration, flood walls and levees, along with non-structural measures such as management plans, warning systems and property acquisition.

**Draft EIS Scoping Process:** The scoping process for public input will involve Federal, State, and local agencies, along with affected Indian tribes, other interested parties and entities. Coordination with natural resources and environmental agencies will be conducted under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. A public meeting will be held (*see DATES*) to include discussion of environmental issues

associated with potential flood risk management alternatives.

Issues to be considered during the development of the Draft EIS and public review and input process include: aesthetics, dredged material disposal, water quality, air and noise quality, hazardous, toxic and radiological waste, threatened and endangered species, environmental justice, wetlands, historic properties, recreation, cumulative impacts, natural resource mitigation and other issues that may affect public health and welfare. It is estimated the Draft EIS will be available for public review and comment in late 2011.

**John M. Niemiec,**

*Project Manager.*

[FR Doc. 2010-23934 Filed 9-23-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3720-58-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Department of the Navy

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Extension of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Land Withdrawal

*Lead Agency:* Department of the Navy, DoD.

*Cooperating Agency:* Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and regulations implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), the Department of the Navy (DoN) and the United States Marine Corps (USMC), with the cooperation of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), intends to prepare a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (L-EIS) and conduct public scoping meetings for the proposed extension of the withdrawal of approximately 226,711 acres of public land in Imperial and Riverside counties, California, for continued military use of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR).

The California Military Lands Withdrawal and Overflights Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-433) withdrew 226,711 acres of public land to DoN, reserving these lands for defense-related purposes for a period of 20 years (until October 31, 2014). The Act provides that the DoN may seek extension of the CMAGR withdrawal. As part of the withdrawal

process, the Secretary of the Navy is required to publish a Draft L-EIS addressing legislative alternatives and the effects of continued withdrawal. The CMAGR Draft L-EIS will evaluate the environmental effects of the proposal to extend the land withdrawal for an additional 25 years (through 2039) and will evaluate alternative actions to restructure the existing range boundary for improved efficiency in the management of the CMAGR and adjacent lands.

**DATES AND ADDRESSES:** DoN is initiating a 90-day public scoping process to identify community interests and specific issues to be addressed in the L-EIS, which starts with the publication of this Notice of Intent (NOI). Four public scoping meetings have been scheduled to enlist written and oral comments regarding the scope of the Draft L-EIS analysis:

1. Monday, December 6, 2010, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Yuma County Library, Rooms B-C, 2951 S. 21st Drive, Yuma, Arizona 85364;

2. Tuesday, December 7, 2010, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Holiday Inn Express—El Centro, Conference Room B, 350 Smoketree Drive, El Centro, California 92243;

3. Wednesday, December 8, 2010, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Holiday Inn, 1800 E. Palm Canyon, Palm Springs, California 92264; and

4. Thursday, December 9, 2010, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., San Diego Planning Commission Hearing Room, 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B, San Diego, California 92123.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** CMAGR L-EIS Project Manager (*Attn:* Kelly Finn), NAVFAC Southwest, 1220 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92132-5190; phone 619-532-4452. Additional supplementary information regarding the CMAGR Draft L-EIS is available at <http://www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com>. Please submit requests for special assistance, sign language interpretation for the hearing impaired, or other auxiliary aids needed at the scoping meeting to the L-EIS Project Manager by November 26, 2010.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Public scoping meeting schedules and locations will also be published in local newspapers. The public is invited to attend these meetings to view project-related displays, speak with DoN and USMC representatives, and submit public comment forms at information stations. A court reporter will be available at the meetings to accept oral comments. The scoping meetings will be conducted in an informal, open

house style meeting format. All comments regarding the scope of issues that should be considered in the Draft L-EIS must be received within 90 days of the publication date of this notice to ensure full consideration in the Draft L-EIS analysis.

*Submitting Comments:* Federal, state, and local agencies and interested parties are encouraged to provide oral and/or written comments regarding the scope of the L-EIS, reasonable alternatives and/or specific issues or topics of interest to the public. Comments may be submitted by: (1) Attending one of the public scoping open houses and providing oral or written comments, (2) submitting a comment form on the project's public website at <http://www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com>, or (3) mail. Written comments should be submitted to the L-EIS Project Manager listed below under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. All written comments on the scope of the L-EIS should be submitted and/or postmarked no later than December 23, 2010.

The USMC will consider all comments received during the scoping period. A mailing list has been assembled to facilitate preparation of the L-EIS. Those on this list will receive notices and information related to L-EIS preparation. This list includes local, state, and federal agencies with jurisdiction or other interests in the alternatives. In addition, the mailing list includes affected municipalities and other interested parties. Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing list may request to be added by contacting the L-EIS project manager at the address provided below.

Before including your address, telephone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that your entire comment—including any personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. Although requests can be made to withhold personal identifying information from public review, it may not be possible to keep this information from disclosure.

The CMAGR has served as an aerial bombing and gunnery training range since the 1940s. The CMAGR currently provides more than 700 square miles (459,000 acres) of land, and overlying and adjacent special-use airspace that extends laterally for several thousands of square miles that, among other activities, supports training in air combat maneuvering and tactics; close air support (where air-to-ground ordnance is fired to directly support friendly forces engaged in ground combat); airborne laser system

operations; air-to-air gunnery; and air-to-ground bombing, rocketry, and strafing. Artillery, demolitions, small arms, and Navy Special Warfare training are also conducted within the range. The CMAGR is a centerpiece in a much larger training complex that incorporates adjacent and nearby special use airspaces and ranges to support full-spectrum combat operations so that Marines can realistically train as they will fight.

*Purpose and Need:* The purpose of and need for the proposed CMAGR renewal is for the DoN to retain a military aircrew training range for near- and long-term preparedness of United States tactical air forces. Extending the land withdrawal will provide for the continued effective implementation of ongoing aircrew training while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to the training needs of new technologies as they develop. The performance of air operations in combat is directly related to the quality and depth of training. The CMAGR provides a unique combination of attributes that serve this training requirement, including the favorable location and flying weather; sufficient land and airspace; diverse terrain; and developed training support facilities.

The CMAGR consists of approximately 459,000 acres of desert mountain terrain in Imperial and Riverside counties, California. The land jurisdiction map of the CMAGR closely resembles a checkerboard where every other section (640 acres or 1 square mile) is managed by either the DoN or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The DoN owns 232,116 acres of the checkerboard, while the alternate sections of the range (226,711 acres) are made up of withdrawn lands managed by the BLM.

Since the CMAGR comprises DoN-owned and BLM-managed public lands, environmental stewardship for the CMAGR is implemented through the Sikes Act for DoN land and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act for BLM land. Because the management goals and procedures of these acts differ, two separate regulatory schemes are required to administer the checkerboard land jurisdiction pattern of the range. Currently, DoN has full administrative jurisdiction to manage military training and resource management on DoN-owned lands within the CMAGR, and the BLM is responsible for resource management on the alternating sections of public lands withdrawn and reserved for DoN use.

*Preliminary Alternatives:* A range of alternatives, including the no-action alternative required by NEPA, will be considered. The L-EIS will also

consider other reasonable alternatives that are identified during scoping or the preparation of the L-EIS. Four preliminary action alternatives have been identified. Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 would include restructuring the CMAGR boundaries to more closely follow certain prominent geographic features, such as aligning part of the CMAGR boundary to closely parallel but no longer cross features such as the Bradshaw Trail and Coachella Canal.

1. Alternative 1 would extend the current withdrawal with no boundary or jurisdictional changes, for a period of 25 years.

2. Alternative 2 would extend the land withdrawal for a period of 25 years with restructured boundaries and would allocate full administrative jurisdiction for resource management to DoN, in addition to the military activities.

3. Alternative 3 would extend the land withdrawal for a period of 25 years and transfer all custody and accountability for the real property within both the current withdrawal and the restructured boundaries from BLM to DoN. All responsibility for resource management and use of the lands would then reside with DoN.

4. Alternative 4 would extend the land withdrawal for a period of 25 years with the restructured boundaries; management of the military activities would remain with DoN and the resource management would remain with BLM.

5. Under Alternative 5, the No Action Alternative, the existing land withdrawal for the CMAGR, provided by the California Military Lands Withdrawal and Overflights Act of 1994, would expire. The capability to support existing and future training activities at the CMAGR that rely on these lands would cease. No alternative range is located in the operational region that has the weapons training capacity of the CMAGR. Consequently, aircrew and other training terminated at the CMAGR by the No Action Alternative would have to be relocated to ranges elsewhere in the country or curtailed. Range clean-up operations at CMAGR would be required.

*Environmental Issues and Resources To Be Examined:* The Draft L-EIS will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with each of the above alternatives and any additional alternatives developed during the scoping period. Issues to be addressed include, but are not limited to, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology, noise, air quality, safety, hazardous materials and waste, socioeconomics and environmental justice. Relevant and

reasonable measures that would avoid or mitigate environmental effects will also be analyzed. Additionally, the USMC will undertake any consultations required by the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and any other applicable law or regulation.

In accordance with the Engle Act of 1958, and the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976, the DoN is required to file an application with the BLM requesting the Secretary of the Interior process a proposed legislative withdrawal and reservation of public land to continue military training exercises at the CMAGR. The proposed alternatives would withdraw at least 222,041 but not more than 242,058 acres of public land. As a result of the proposed boundary restructuring, approximately 15,347 acres of public land not in the existing 226,711 acre withdrawal would be withdrawn. The restructured boundary would offer the best opportunities to define and manage a secure boundary for the CMAGR, safeguard public use of adjacent public land, and consolidate holdings for more efficient environmental stewardship. The public land would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including surface entry, mining, mineral leasing, and the Materials Act of 1947.

**L-EIS Schedule:** This notice is the first phase of the L-EIS process and announces the 90-day public comment period and public scoping meetings to identify community concerns and local issues that should be addressed in the L-EIS. The next phase occurs when a Notice of Availability (NOA) is published in the **Federal Register** and local media to publicly announce the release of the Draft L-EIS. A minimum 45-day public comment period for the Draft L-EIS will commence upon publication of the NOA in the **Federal Register**. The USMC will consider and respond to all comments received on the Draft L-EIS when preparing the Final L-EIS. After publication of the Draft L-EIS, one or more public hearings will be held, and public notice will be given regarding the time and place of the hearing(s). The Draft L-EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment before the public hearing(s).

Dated: September 17, 2010.

**D.J. Werner,**

*Lieutenant Commander, Office of the Judge Advocate General, U.S. Navy, Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2010-23984 Filed 9-23-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Skokomish General Investigation Study, Mason County, WA

**AGENCY:** Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will prepare an Integrated Feasibility Report/Environmental Impact Statement (FR/EIS) for proposed ecosystem restoration and flood risk management in the Skokomish River Basin which empties into Hood Canal, near Shelton, Washington. The Skokomish Indian Tribe and Mason County are the non-Federal sponsors for the project.

The Skokomish River General Investigation (GI) Feasibility Study for the Skokomish River Basin is being conducted under the authority of Section 209 of the Flood Control Act of 1962 (Pub. L. 87-874).

The Skokomish River channel has been filling with sediment for several decades, resulting in frequent flooding and decreasing natural ecosystem structures, functions, and processes necessary to support critical fish and wildlife habitat throughout the Skokomish River Basin. Increased sediment load, reduced flows, and encroachment of the floodplain by man-made structures are leading to continued degradation of natural ecosystem functions and habitat. The degraded riverine and estuarine aquatic habitat has caused a decline in the population of critical fish and wildlife species, including multiple ESA listed species. Additionally, the channel capacity of the Skokomish River varies significantly. Limited channel capacity causes floodwater to leave the banks at various locations, ultimately causing frequent flooding of local roads, two state highways, agricultural fields, residences, and other structures.

The Skokomish River GI is a basin-wide study; however, work by others, constrain the limit of Corps' involvement to actions primarily in the lower Skokomish River Valley. Problems, opportunities, and objectives will be examined within the context of the entire watershed. Recognizing the relationships between the upper and lower watershed will ensure a comprehensive study overview.

The purpose of the FR/EIS and feasibility study is to evaluate if there is a federal interest in aquatic ecosystem restoration and flood risk management in the Skokomish River Basin.

**DATES:** Submit comments by October 25, 2010 on the scope of issues to be addressed in the draft FR/EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Address all comments concerning this notice to Mr. Patrick Cagney, Environmental Resources Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, P.O. Box 3755, Seattle, WA 98124-3755. Submit electronic comments and supporting data to [patrick.t.cagney@usace.army.mil](mailto:patrick.t.cagney@usace.army.mil)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions regarding the scoping process or preparation of the draft EIS may be directed to Mr. Patrick Cagney, telephone (206) 764-3654, e-mail [patrick.t.cagney@usace.army.mil](mailto:patrick.t.cagney@usace.army.mil)

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. **Study Area:** The Skokomish River Basin (Basin) is located in northwest Washington, predominantly in Mason County. The project study area is comprised of the entire drainage basin, including the estuary at Annas Bay. The river collects drainage from an approximate 240 square mile drainage basin, and eventually flows into southern Hood Canal, an arm of Puget Sound. The river flows out of three sub-basins (South Fork, North Fork, and Vance Creek) into a broad, flat alluvial plain known as the Skokomish River Valley. The Skokomish Indian Reservation is located within the lower valley and extends along the southeast portion of the Olympic Peninsula. The Basin is defined by the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 16 and is located within U.S. Congressional District #6 of Washington State.

2. **Alternatives:** The EIS will separately evaluate alternatives for aquatic ecosystem restoration and flood risk management. Alternatives that will be evaluated under aquatic ecosystem restoration will include an alternative that uses physical actions to restore the Basin's habitat-forming processes and/or create habitats that have been lost as a result of historic alterations. Example of actions that could occur under this alternative include: increasing floodplain habitat and connectivity, restoring off-channel habitat for juvenile fish, improving estuarine functions and processes, and increasing emergent and riparian vegetation. Another alternative that will be considered will focus on benefits to the several aquatic species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Actions under this alternative could include creation of spawning and



# CHOCOLATE MOUNTAIN AERIAL GUNNERY RANGE LAND WITHDRAWAL RENEWAL

## Marine Corps Training Requirement

Marine Corps aviators must “train as they fight” in order to deploy effectively as members of the Air Combat Elements of Marine Air Ground Task Forces. Training as they fight ensures that Marines will have the greatest chance of success in fulfilling their missions, and returning home safely. Marine Corps aviators must be able to fulfill their essential training tasks, and the Marine Corps must be able to train all aviators efficiently to ensure that units are ready to deploy when needed.

## Legislative Requirement

The California Desert Protection Act of 1994 withdrew public lands for the Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) for 20 years, expiring in 2014. The Act requires the Marine Corps to publicly distribute a Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) in 2012 if it desires to retain the land for training purposes.

## Stakeholder Involvement

The publication of the Notice of Intent began a 90-day public comment period, which will include four public scoping meetings at which oral and written comments from stakeholders on the proposed renewal of the range will be recorded. Those comments, and of others submitting by mail or electronically, will help to shape the final set of alternatives for study in the LEIS.

## Proposed Alternatives

There are five preliminary alternatives being proposed for study in the LEIS. These alternatives are subject to change based on public comments and analyses. Boundary adjustments have been proposed in order to enhance training efficiency, promote public safety and provide better management throughout the range.

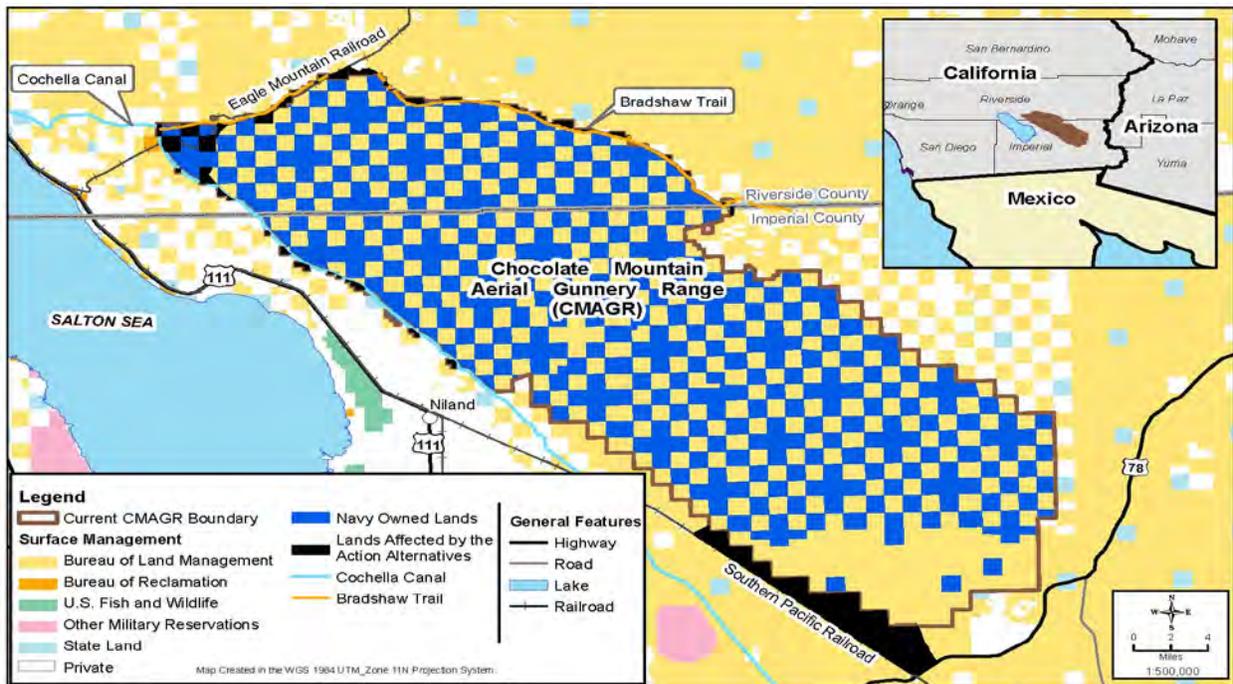
- **Alternative 1** renews the current withdrawal with no boundary or jurisdictional changes.
- **Alternative 2** creates minor boundary adjustments, changes the jurisdictions for land management.
- **Alternative 3** creates minor boundary adjustments, changes the jurisdictions for land management and transfers title of the public lands to the DON.
- **Alternative 4** creates minor boundary adjustments.
- **Alternative 5** is the no action alternative and results in the loss of the CMAGR for military training.

The primary objective of range management is to maintain and advance the training conditions of the CMAGR so that it continues to offer Marine and other service commanders the diversity and flexibility necessary to employ and exercise their units in all phases of tactical aviation training to the fullest extent and under conditions that realistically simulate combat.

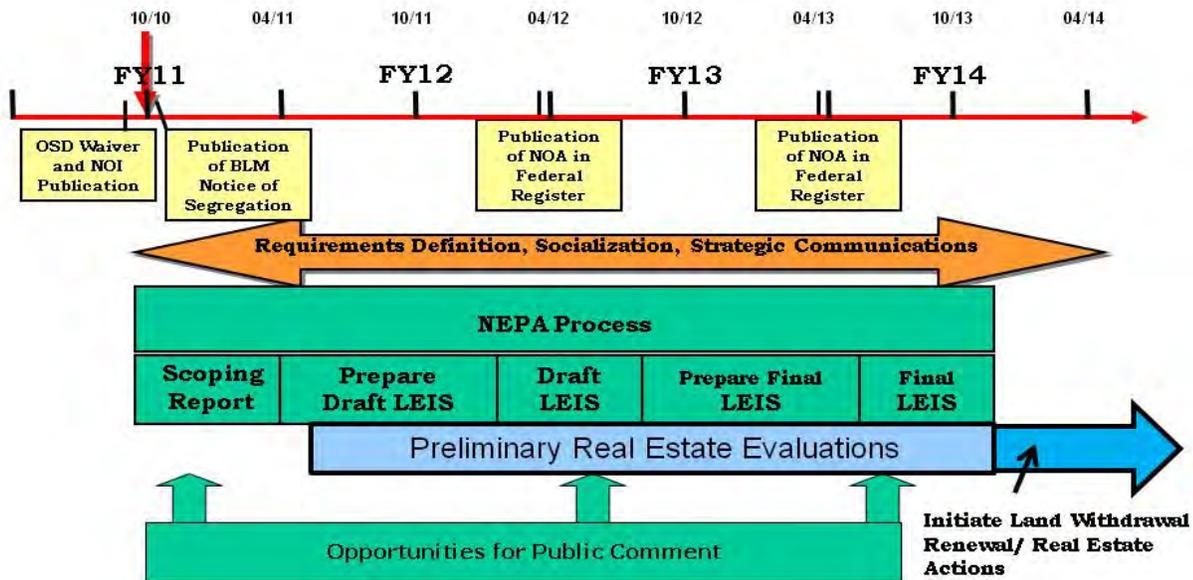


For additional information, please visit:  
[www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com](http://www.chocolatemountainrenewal.com)





The above map depicts both the geographic context (top right inset) of the CMAGR, the current ownership of the parcels that make up the range, and the potential parcels that will be affected by the various alternatives that are being proposed.



### Current Schedule, Timeline and Milestones

- September 2010** – Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS)
- 6-9 December 2010** – Public Scoping Meetings on the alternatives and issues for examination in the LEIS
- May 2012** – Draft LEIS published and available for public review and comment
- May/June 2012** – Public Meetings for review and comments on Draft LEIS
- May 2013** – Notice of Availability of Final LEIS, release to public
- 2013-2014** – Initiate land withdrawal renewal or other real estate actions

# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement

Newsletter 1 – November 2010

## Military Need for Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Continues

The Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR), located in Imperial and Riverside counties, California, was created during World War II to provide American aircrews with much needed training in aerial gunnery and bombing. The CMAGR provides more than 700 square miles of land and several thousands of square miles of overlying and adjacent special use airspace that continues to support training that is essential to the readiness of the nation's Marine Corps and Naval air forces. Although military aircraft, weapons systems, and tactics have advanced and changed markedly since the 1940s, the CMAGR continues to be a critical military training asset and is expected to be used to support new aircraft including the MV-22 (also known as the Osprey) and the F-35 (also known as the Joint Strike Fighter).



Imagery provided by MCAS Yuma Public Affairs Office

Land jurisdiction at the CMAGR resembles a checkerboard, where every other section (640 acres or approximately 1 square mile) falls under either Department of the Navy (DoN) or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction. The DoN owns about 232,116 acres of the checkerboard while the alternate sections (approximately 226,711 acres) are withdrawn public lands managed by the BLM. The public lands administered by the BLM are reserved for military uses for 20 years under the terms of the California Military Lands Withdrawal and Overflight Act of 1994 (see map on page 3). The DoN and BLM lands are used in common to support the defense activities that occur at the range. Because the current withdrawal of public lands is scheduled to expire in October 2014 and there continues to be a military need for the CMAGR, the DoN is initiating the process to request that Congress renew the land withdrawal and military reservation for another 25 years.

## Legislative Environmental Impact Statement to be Prepared

The DoN is preparing a Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, to evaluate potential environmental effects of the proposed renewal of the CMAGR land withdrawal. The BLM will serve as a cooperating agency for preparing the Draft LEIS. The DoN has filed a land withdrawal application with BLM for public lands currently within the CMAGR as well as for some adjacent lands that may

be considered for withdrawal to establish a more effective range boundary. The withdrawal application triggers a temporary segregation of the affected lands from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws (including the mining, mineral leasing, and geothermal leasing laws) to allow time for the land withdrawal issue to be decided.

Proposed boundary adjustments would establish a range boundary that follows prominent geographic features such as the Bradshaw Trail and Coachella Canal. Benefits of a boundary adjustment include enhanced safety through a better demarked boundary and improved efficiency in land management. The current pattern of split jurisdiction between the DoN and BLM contributes to the duplication of management efforts, undefined responsibilities, and other inefficiencies. Consequently, the Draft LEIS will explore land management alternatives including maintaining the status quo of split management versus transferring all natural and cultural resource management responsibilities to the DoN. The following alternatives have been identified for the Draft LEIS; others may be added during the scoping process.

- 1. Alternative 1 proposes to renew the current withdrawal, with no boundary or jurisdictional changes, for a period of 25 years.**
- 2. Alternative 2 would renew the land withdrawal for another 25 years with restructured boundaries and would allocate full administrative jurisdiction for resource management to DoN, in addition to the military activities.**
- 3. Alternative 3 proposes to transfer all custody and accountability of the real property within both the current withdrawal and the restructured boundaries to DoN. The DoN would assume all responsibility for resource management and use of the lands.**
- 4. Alternative 4 would renew the land withdrawal for another 25 years with the restructured boundaries; management of the military activities would remain with DoN and the resource management would remain with BLM.**
- 5. Under Alternative 5, the No Action Alternative, the existing land withdrawal for the CMAGR would expire. The capability to support existing and future training activities at the CMAGR that rely on these lands would cease and these training activities would have to be relocated to ranges elsewhere in the country or curtailed. Range clean-up operations at CMAGR would be required.**

The Draft LEIS will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with each of the alternatives and any additional alternatives developed during the scoping period. Environmental issues that will be addressed in the LEIS include, but are not limited to, public utilities, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology, noise, air quality, safety, hazardous materials and waste, socioeconomics, and environmental justice. Relevant and reasonable measures that would avoid or mitigate environmental effects also will be analyzed.

As shown on the project schedule, it is anticipated that the Draft LEIS will be issued for public review in Spring to Summer 2012. The Final LEIS is anticipated in Spring 2013, after which Congress will decide whether or not to renew the withdrawal.

### Public Input Sought

A 90-day public scoping period began on September 24, 2010, with the publication in the *Federal Register* of a Notice of Intent to prepare an LEIS. The DoN and BLM invite interested agencies, organizations, Native American tribes, and members of the public to submit comments and provide input into defining the scope of the proposed action and identifying pertinent environmental issues. This scoping period also provides the opportunity to submit comments on the temporary segregation and land withdrawal processes (see page 3 for more information).

Comments may be submitted at the public scoping meetings. Written comments may be submitted electronically by completing the comment form on the "Get Involved" section of the project website, [www.ChocolateMountainRenewal.com](http://www.ChocolateMountainRenewal.com). Or, mail comments to:

Department of the Navy  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command  
Southwest Region  
Attn: Kelly L. Finn, NAVFAC Project Manager  
Building 1, Central IPT  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

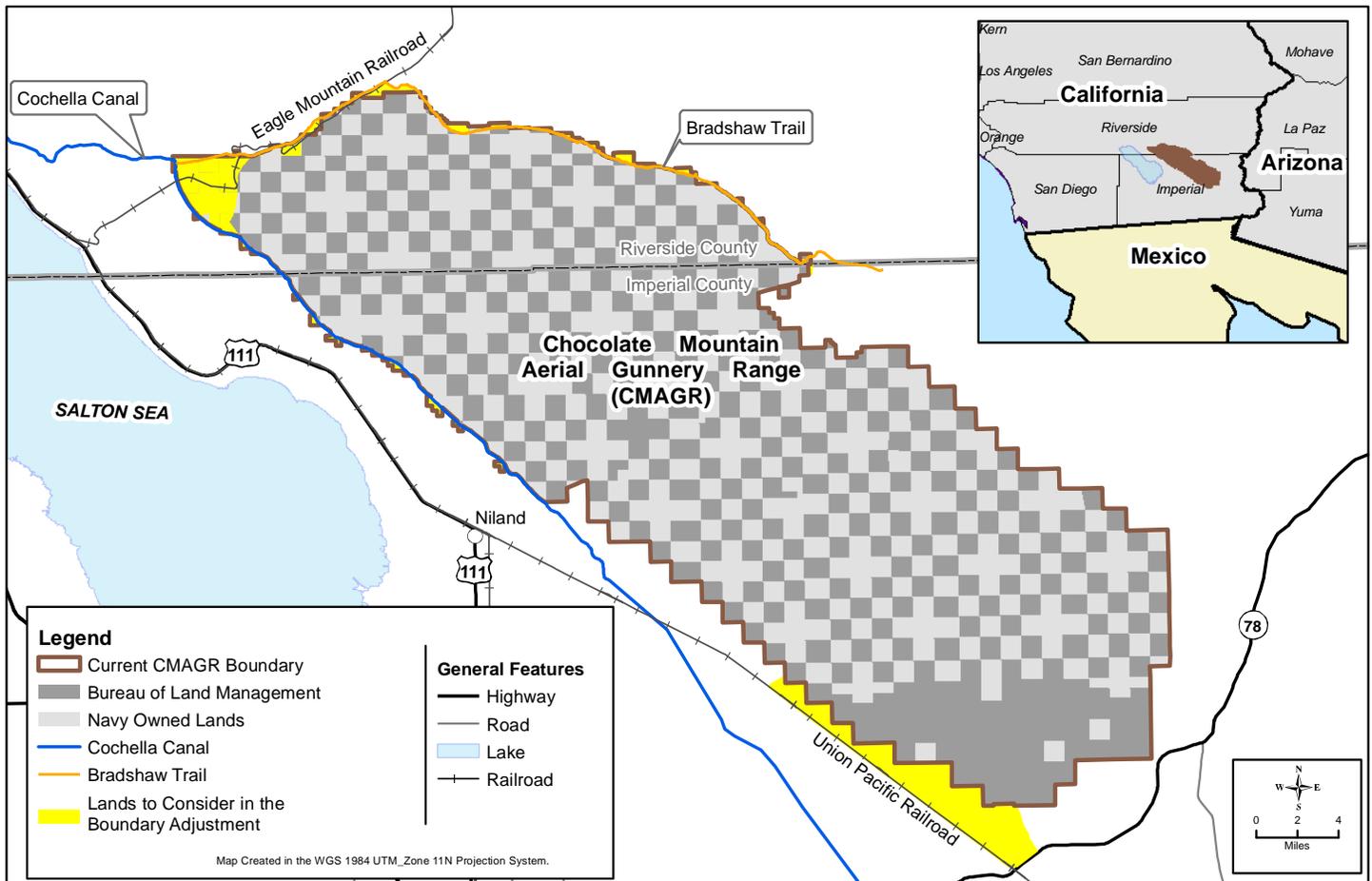
**Written comments must be submitted by December 23, 2010, to ensure full consideration in the Draft LEIS.**

### Project Schedule



Imagery provided by MCAS Yuma Public Affairs Office

## Project Location Map



### What is a land withdrawal?

Land withdrawals are a management tool used to transfer administrative jurisdiction (management authority) from one federal agency (in this case, BLM) to another (in this case, DoN) and restrict other uses on that land. As part of the withdrawal process, lands are segregated, or closed to the operation of all or some of the public land laws and/or mineral laws. While there are different types of withdrawals, the CMAGR would be processed as a Congressional withdrawal, requiring a legislative action by Congress in the form of public law (Act of Congress).

National defense land withdrawals of more than 5,000 acres require Congressional approval. Before acting, Congress requires an assessment of the effects on land use and environmental resources. During this assessment period, the lands are temporarily segregated or closed to other competing uses until Congress makes a decision and takes action on the proposed withdrawal. During this segregated period, lands would remain under BLM jurisdiction and temporary land use authorizations could be allowed at the discretion of both the local BLM field office manager and with the concurrence of the DoN.

BLM is participating as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the LEIS. The public can submit comments on the land withdrawal and segregation process during the LEIS scoping period, which began September 24, 2010 and continues through December 23, 2010. Comments also will be accepted during the scoping meetings on December 6-9, 2010.



Imagery from NAVY.mil



# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



Interested parties are invited to participate in the scoping process, to both help define the environmental issues to be analyzed, and provide input into a reasonable range of alternatives.

**All meetings will be held in an open house format between 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at the following locations:**

**Monday,  
December 6, 2010**  
Yuma County Library  
Rooms B-C  
2951 S. 21st Drive  
Yuma, AZ 85364

**Tuesday,  
December 7, 2010**  
Holiday Inn Express –  
El Centro  
Conference Room B  
350 Smoketree Drive  
El Centro, CA 92243

**Wednesday,  
December 8, 2010**  
Holiday Inn  
1800 E. Palm Canyon  
Palm Springs, CA 92264

**Thursday,  
December 9, 2010**  
San Diego Planning  
Commission  
Hearing Room  
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B  
San Diego, CA 92123

**For more information on the project please visit [www.ChocolateMountainRenewal.com](http://www.ChocolateMountainRenewal.com).**

Department of the Navy  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest Region  
Attn: Kelly L. Finn, NAVFAC Project Manager  
Building 1, Central IPT  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

### Elected Officials Contact List

Agency/Organization	Department	Last Name	First Name	Title
Yuma County	Supervisors	Pickel	Robert	County Administrator
Yuma County	Board of Supervisors	Ferguson	Greg	Chair
US House of Representatives	District 50	Bilbray	Brian	U.S. Congressman
US Senate		Boxer	Barbara	U.S. Senator
US House of Representatives	District 53	Davis	Susan	U.S. Congresswoman
US Senate		Fienstein	Dianne	U.S. Senator
US House of Representatives	District 51	Filner	Bob	U.S. Congressman
US House of Representatives	District 7	Grijalva	Raul	U.S. Congressman
US House of Representatives	District 52	Hunter	Duncan	U.S. Congressman
US Senate		Kyl	Jon	U.S. Senator
US Senate		McCain	John	U.S. Senator
City of Somerton		Porchas	Martin	Mayor
City of Wellton		Deermer	James	Mayor
City of Yuma		Krieger	Alan	Mayor
Yuma City Hall				
Governor's Office	Urban & Military Affairs	Anable	Michael	Policy Advisor
Governor's Office	Military Affairs Commissi	Atkins	Lisa	Co-Chair
Governor's Office	Urban & Military Affairs	Daniels	Victor	Policy Advisor
Governor's Office	Military Affairs Commissi	Finnegan	Tom	Co-Chair
		Brewer	Jan	Governor of Arizona
California State Senate	District 40	Ducheny	Denise	Senator
California Assembly	District 80	Perez	Manuel	Assemblymember
		Schwarzenegger	Arnold	Governor of California

**Public Facilities and Special Interest**

<b>Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>email and/or website</b>
<b>PUBLIC/FACILITIES</b>					
Yuma County Library – Main Branch					
Brawley Public Library					
San Diego Public Library - San Ysidro Branch					
Palo Verde Valley Library					
Imperial County Library					
Niland Library					
<b>SPECIAL INTEREST</b>					
The Sonoran Institute					
Audubon Arizona					
Northwest Watershed Council			Earl Engelhardt		
Western Resource Advocates					
Center for Biological Diversity					
Western Watersheds Projects			Greta Anderson		
The Grand Canyon Trust					
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council					
Friends of Grand Canyon			Dennis Brownridge		
Wild Earth Guardians					
Arizona Riparian Council			Kris Randall		
Arizona Sportsman					
The Nature Conservancy	Arizona Field Office				
Arizona Audubon Society					
Mohave Sportsman's Club					
Cerbat Ridge Runners					<a href="http://crratvclub.tripod.com">http://crratvclub.tripod.com</a>
Walapai 4 Wheelers					
Bullhead 4 Wheelers, Inc.					
Desert Bighorn Council			Arthur Fuller		
Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society					
Arizona Mule Deer Society			Ulrich Flach		
Arizona Antelope Association					
Arizona Wildlife Outfitters			Don Martin		
Arizona Wildlife Federation					
Arizona Chapter of the Wildlife Society			Brian Dykstra		

**Public Facilities and Special Interest**

<b>AgencyOrganization</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>email and/or website</b>
Defenders of Wildlife					
Sierra Club	Grand Canyon Chapter		Sandy Bahr		
Public Lands Advocacy			Claire M. Moseley	Executive Director	
Kalamazoo Materials					
CO River Basin Salinity Control Forum			Jack Barnett	Executive Director	
Yuma County Farm Bureau				President	
Defenders of Wildlife					
Arizona Native Plant Society		Tellman	Barbara		
Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage		Clark	James		
Center for Environmental Connections		Kulakofsky	Rob	Executive Director	
The Wilderness Society		Waltman	Jim		
Arizona Pilots Assoc.		Martin	Bernard		
The Wilderness Society		Eaton	Pam		
Environmental Health Coalition		Forbis, Esquire	Paula		
Yuma Chamber of Commerce		Rosevear	Ken		
League of Arizona Cities and Towns				Director	
Paradise Valley Community College					
Associated Citrus Packers Inc.		Spencer	Mark	CEO	
Arizona Western College				Chairperson	
United Veterans Council		Brunner	Joe	Chairman	
Land and Water Fund					
San Diego Audubon Society					
Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club		Fugate	Jon	Chairman, Legislative Affairs	
Dry Lands Institute		Felger	Richard		
The Nature Conservancy				Public Lands Protection Planner	
Tucson Audobon Society		Macys	Sonja	Executive Director	
Forest Guardians		Oliva	John-Paul	Conservation Biologist	
Flying High/Flying Low		Scott	Kenneth		
North Gila Irrigation District					
University Community Planning Group		Colley	Linda	Chair	
Pecan Grove Garden Club		Colvin	Valenia		
Airport 2000		Mitchell	George		
Tonopah Area Coalition		Roetto	Paul	President	
The Sierra Club - San Diego Chapter		Owens	Renee		
San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)		Gregor	Carolina	Senior Regional Planner	

**Public Facilities and Special Interest**

<b>Agency Organization</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>email and/or website</b>
Southern CA Assoc. of Governments (SCAG)	Land Use & Env Planning	Liu	Huasha	Director	
SCAG	Imperial County Regional Office				
SCAG	Riverside County Regional Office				
Audubon Society, State Office					
Yuma Nursery Supply		Haile	Mike		
Arizona Volksvagen Club		Desch	Carol		
Hia Ced O'odham Alliance		Eiler	Lorraine	President	
Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization		Luckie	Mack	Executive Director	
Frank Luke Chapter-Air Force Association		Bailey	Harry	President	
Arizona Wilderness Coalition		Damp	Stacy		
Friends of Cabeza Prieta		Huddy	Paul		
Economic Development Corporation					
Sonoran Desert National Park Friends Conservation Committee		Broyles	Bill		
Rural Alliance	Military Accountability	Bukowski	Grace		
Natural Resources Defense Council		Wald	Johanna H.	Director, Land Program	
Sky Island Alliance		Barnes	David		
Yuma Association of Realtors					
Sonoran Institute					
California Native Plant Society		Landis	Frank		
Yuma Cary Audubon Society					
Yuma Irrigation District		Green	Rex		
Airport Advisory Committee		Galt	Steven		
Sonoran Desert National Park Friends		Fitch	Ken		
Arizona Native Plant Society		Michel	Kathryn		
Yuma Co. Water Users Association		Pope	Don		
Yuma Audubon Society		Meister	Cary	Conservation Chairman	
International Sonoran Desert Alliance					
AZ State Association of 4WD Clubs		Jones	Brad		
Desert Bighorn Council		Rubin	Esther		
College of Sciences, San Diego State University	Dept. of Biology	Bauder	Ellen		

YELLOW indicates info provided by URS

### Private Citizen Contact List

Last Name	First Name
Augustine	Roger & Carolyn
Ballesio	Joan
Balsamo	Mary
Casey	Wayne
Chau	Kun
Cheung	Susanna
Clem	Helaine & Donald
Din	Salah Ud
Do	Son
Elsesser	Dean
Famarzi	Behnam
Friends of the Desert Mountains	
Gray	D
Gutierrez	Javier
KAISER EAGLE MOUNTAIN INC	
Laitipaya	Siriwan
LAKE TAMARISK DEV	
Luper	Olin
Miller	Suzan
Paterno	Pearl
RIVERSIDE LAND CONSERVANCY	
Rodda	George
Senapati	Pramod
Shadid	Albert
SMITH RIVER LUMBER CO	
Swanson	Anthony
THUNDERBOLT ENTERPRISES INC	
Unis	Frances
Vodhanel	Michael
Voss	William
Weintraub	Peter
Westrope	Kathie

## **Chocolate Mountain Mailing List**

<b>Federal_State Agencies:</b>	78	
<b>Elected Officials:</b>	23	
<b>Interested Parties (NGO):</b>		
<b>Public/Facilities:</b>	6	
<b>Special Interest</b>	90	
<b>Tribal:</b>	51	
<b>Other Interested Parties &amp; Commentors:</b>	32	
<b>Media:</b>	1	
	<b>281</b>	<b>Total</b>



## PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

### Renewal of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Land Withdrawal

The Department of the Navy (DoN) is proposing to renew the land withdrawal and military reservation of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) for another 25 years. The CMAGR currently includes land owned by the DoN, in addition to withdrawn public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The DoN, in cooperation with the BLM, is preparing a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) to analyze potential effects that the proposed action may have on the environment, in support of a request to Congress to renew the land withdrawal. The LEIS will consider several alternatives, such as modifying the range boundary and transferring the title or resource management of BLM land to the DoN.

#### **The U.S. Marine Corps wants your input!**

Attend a public meeting to provide comments. **These meetings will be in an "open house" format between 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.** There will be no formal presentation.\*

#### **Or, submit written comments by December 23, 2010 to:**

Department of the Navy  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest Region  
Attn: Kelly L. Finn, NAVFAC Project Manager  
Building 1, Central IPT  
1220 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
Or online at: [ChocolateMountainRenewal.com](http://ChocolateMountainRenewal.com)

\* Individuals who require special accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, should contact the LEIS Project Manager at 619-532-4452 or [cmagr@urscorp.com](mailto:cmagr@urscorp.com) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.



#### **Yuma, AZ**

Monday, December 6, 2010  
Yuma County Library  
2951 S. 21st Drive

#### **El Centro, CA**

Tuesday, December 7, 2010  
Holiday Inn Express  
350 Smoketree Drive

#### **Palm Springs, CA**

Wednesday, December 8, 2010  
Holiday Inn  
1800 E. Palm Canyon

#### **San Diego, CA**

Thursday, December 9, 2010  
San Diego Planning Commission  
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B

*During scoping, comments also will be accepted on the BLM withdrawal application and temporary segregation of public land.*

**APPENDIX B**  
**AGENCY AND TRIBAL COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION**

Agency and Tribal Notification Letter  
Tribal Contact List



## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION  
BOX 99100  
YUMA, ARIZONA 85369-9100

In Reply Refer To

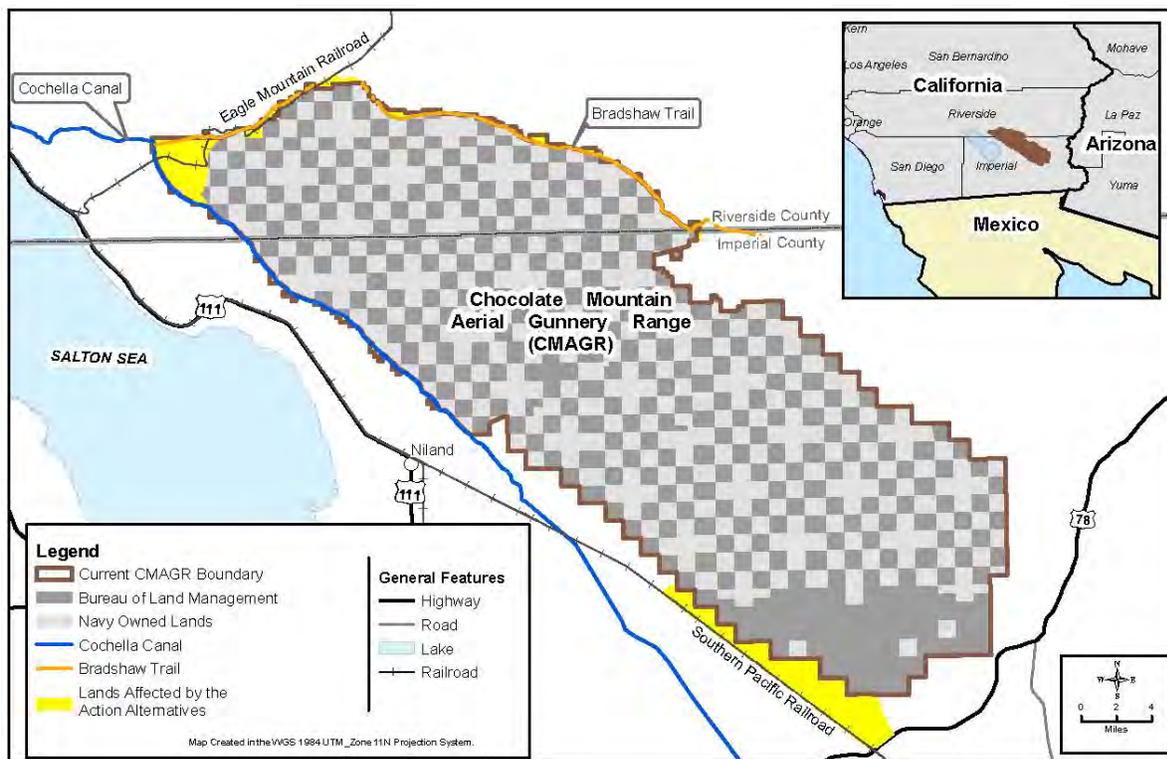
November 4, 2010

Jim Bartel  
Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Carlsbad Field Office  
6010 Hidden Valley Road, Suite 101  
Carlsbad, CA 92011

RE: Renewal of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Land Withdrawal

On September 24, 2010, the Department of the Navy (DoN) published in the Federal Register a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a legislative environmental impact statement (LEIS) for the renewal of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) land withdrawal. A copy of the NOI is enclosed for your information.

The CMAGR comprises approximately 459,000 acres in California's Imperial and Riverside counties (see map below). Land jurisdiction at the CMAGR currently resembles a "checkerboard" pattern, where every other section (640 acres or approximately 1 square mile) falls under either DoN ownership (232,116 acres) or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction (226,711 acres of withdrawn public lands). The public lands administered by the BLM are reserved for military uses for 20 years under the terms of the California Military Lands Withdrawal and Overflight Act of 1994. The DoN and BLM lands are used in common to support the defense activities that occur at the range. Because the current withdrawal of public lands is scheduled to expire in October 2014 and there continues to be a military need for the CMAGR, the DoN is initiating the process to request that Congress renew the land withdrawal and military reservation for another 25 years (through 2039).



The DoN has filed a land withdrawal application with BLM for public lands currently within the CMAGR as well as for some adjacent lands that may be considered for withdrawal to establish a more effective range boundary. The DoN also is preparing a Draft LEIS to address the potential environmental effects of extending the CMAGR land withdrawal. The BLM is serving as a cooperating agency for preparing the Draft LEIS.

The LEIS will evaluate several alternatives that would modify the existing range boundary to follow prominent geographic features such as the Bradshaw Trail and Coachella Canal, enhancing safety through an improved boundary demarcation and efficiency in land management. The Draft LEIS also will explore land management alternatives to resolve challenges associated with the current pattern of split jurisdiction between the DoN and BLM; some of these challenges include unclear responsibilities that contribute to the duplication of efforts and other inefficiencies. There are four preliminary action alternatives and a no-action alternative that will be shared with the public for review and comment, as summarized in the table below. Additional alternatives may be considered as a result of scoping comments.

### Preliminary Alternatives

Alternative	Description of Alternative
Alternative 1	<i>Renewal of Status Quo</i> – Renew the current withdrawal, with no boundary or jurisdictional changes, for a period of 25 years.
Alternative 2	<i>Full Administrative Jurisdiction to DoN</i> – Renew the land withdrawal for another 25 years with restructured boundaries and allocate full administrative jurisdiction for resource management to DoN, in addition to the military activities.
Alternative 3	<i>Transfer of Title to DoN</i> – Renew the withdrawal for another 25 years and transfer all custody and accountability for the real property within both the current withdrawal and the restructured boundaries to DoN. The DoN would assume all responsibility for resource management and use of the lands.
Alternative 4	<i>Shared Administrative Jurisdiction</i> – Renew the land withdrawal for another 25 years with the restructured boundaries; management of the military activities would remain with DoN and the resource management would remain with BLM.
No-Action	<i>No Renewal of Withdrawal</i> – The existing land withdrawal for the CMAGR would expire. The capability to support existing and future training activities at the CMAGR that rely on these lands would cease and these training activities would have to be relocated to ranges elsewhere in the country or curtailed. Range clean-up operations at CMAGR would be required.

Publication of the NOI initiates a 90-day public comment period, during which time agencies and the public are encouraged to identify issues and concerns that should be considered in the Draft LEIS. ***Please submit comments by December 23, 2010, to ensure full consideration in the Draft LEIS.*** Comments may be provided at one of the following public scoping meetings. All meetings will be held in an open house format between 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Yuma, AZ  
 Monday, December 6, 2010  
 Yuma County Library  
 2951 S. 21st Drive

El Centro, CA  
 Tuesday, December 7, 2010  
 Holiday Inn Express  
 350 Smoketree Drive

Palm Springs, CA  
 Wednesday, December 8, 2010  
 Holiday Inn  
 1800 E. Palm Canyon

San Diego, CA  
 Thursday, December 9, 2010  
 San Diego Planning Commission  
 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B

Written comments may be submitted to:

Department of the Navy  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest Region  
Attn: Kelly L. Finn, NAVFAC Project Manager  
Building 1, Central IPT  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
Or online at: [ChocolateMountainRenewal.com](http://ChocolateMountainRenewal.com)

The Marine Corps is committed to working with neighbors and stakeholders during this process. Members of the project team would be interested in meeting with USFWS representatives to discuss your issues of concern and to exchange information and ideas regarding the potential need for Section 7 consultation. Please contact Mr. Ron Pearce, Range Management Director, at 928-269-3401 or [ronald.pearce@usmc.mil](mailto:ronald.pearce@usmc.mil) if you have questions or to coordinate on scheduling a time to meet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.L. Pearce', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R.L. Pearce  
By Direction of the  
Commanding Officer



## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION  
BOX 99100  
YUMA, ARIZONA 85369-9100

In Reply Refer To

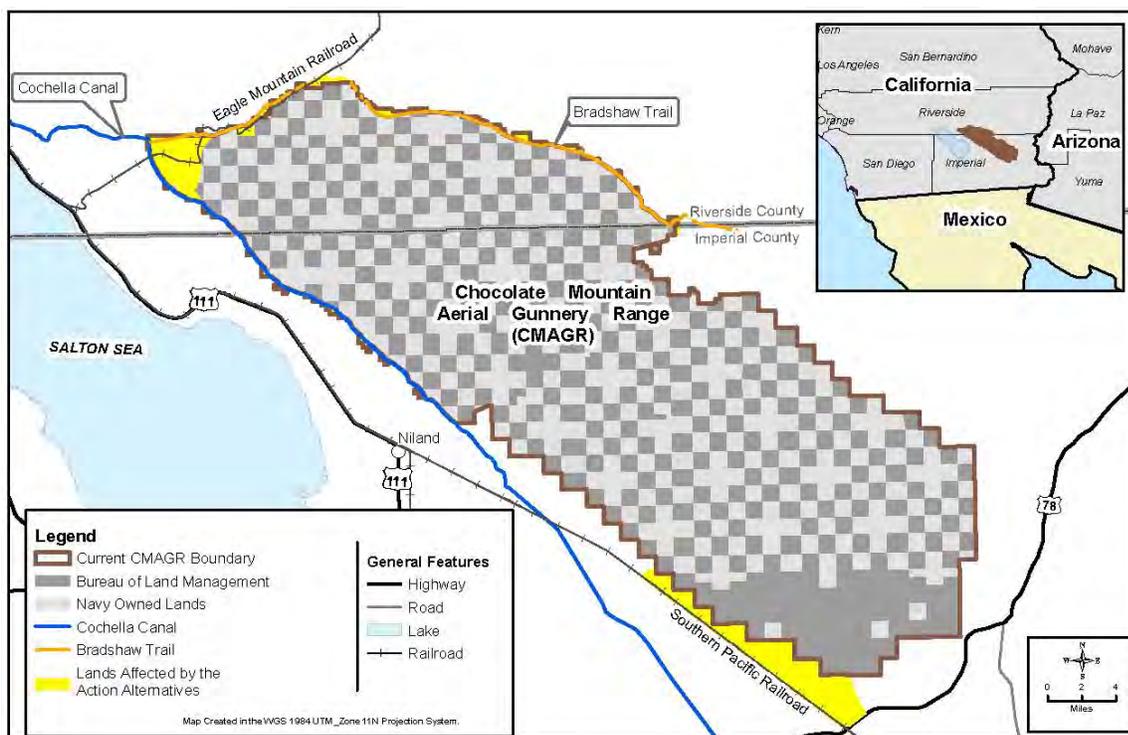
November 4, 2010

Amy Heuslein  
Environmental Protection Officer  
BIA  
Western Regional Office  
2600 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

RE: Renewal of the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Land Withdrawal

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San Diego, CA  
 Thursday, December 9, 2010  
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Written comments may be submitted to:

Department of the Navy  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest Region  
Attn: Kelly L. Finn, NAVFAC Project Manager  
Building 1, Central IPT  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
Or online at: [ChocolateMountainRenewal.com](http://ChocolateMountainRenewal.com)

The Marine Corps is committed to working with neighbors and stakeholders during this process. If you have questions or would like to meet to discuss the project or issues that should be addressed in the LEIS, please contact Ms. Kelly Finn at 619-532-4452 or at [Kelly.l.finn@navy.gov](mailto:Kelly.l.finn@navy.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.L. Pearce', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R.L. Pearce  
By direction of the  
Commanding Officer

This letter sent to:

Amy Heuslein  
Environmental Protection Officer  
BIA  
Western Regional Office  
2600 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Liz Easley  
BLM  
CA State Office  
2800 Cottage Way, W-1928  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Tom Zale  
Assoc. Field Manager  
BLM  
El Centro Field Office  
1661 S. 4 St.  
El Centro, CA 92243

John Kalish  
Field Manager  
BLM  
Palm Springs Office  
1201 Bird Center Dr  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dwight Hempel  
Military Programs Coordinator  
BLM  
1849 C Street, Suite LS 1000  
Washington, DC 20240

Teresa Raml  
District Manager  
BLM California Desert District  
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Yuma Area Office  
7301 Calle Agua Salada  
Yuma, AZ 85364

U.S. Department of Agricultural/Forest Service  
10845 Rancho Bernardo Rd #200  
San Diego, CA 92127

Christian Schoneman  
Refuge Manager  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Sono Bono Salton Sea NWR  
906 W. Sinclair Rd  
Calipatria, CA 92233

Park Manager  
U.S. National Park Service  
Joshua Tree National Park  
74485 National Park Drive  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Karen Vitulano  
USEPA Region IX Environmental Review  
Office  
75 Hawthorne Street CED-2  
San Francisco, CA 94105

General Manager  
Coachella Valley Water District  
P.O. Box 1058  
Coachella, CA 92236

Richard Nitsos  
California Department of Fish and Game  
Environmental Services Division  
4949 Viewridge Ave  
San Diego, CA 92123

Park Manager  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Anza Borrego Desert State Park  
200 Palm Canyon Drive  
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Milford Wayne Donaldson  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
1416 9th Street, Room 1442  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Intergovernmental Review Branch  
California Department of Transportation  
Transportation Planning Division  
4050 Taylor Street  
San Diego, CA 92110

Peter Michael  
California RWQCB - San Diego Region  
9174 Sky Park Court Ste 100  
San Diego, CA 92101

Office of the Attorney General Env. Unit  
110 West A Street, Suite 600  
San Diego, CA 92101

State of California Water Resources Control  
Board  
Division of Water Quality  
P.O. Box 944213  
Sacramento, CA 94244

**CMAGR Tribal Contact List**

Native American Tribe	Department	Tribe Contact(s)	Title	Record of Conversation/Voicemail
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians		Mr. Richard M. Milanovich	Chairman	Patty Tuck (THPO) instructed me to not contact him because all requests go through her.
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians		Ms. Patricia Tuck	THPO	Spoke with her and she informed me that she did not receive the letter because it was sent to the wrong address and person. I forwarded a copy of the letter to Ms. Tuck. She will review and try to provide comment prior to the close of public scoping (12/23/10).
Ak-Chin Indian Community			Cultural Resources	Left message on the voicemail- waiting for call back (12/22/10 9.15am)
Ak-Chin Indian Community		Ms. Vicky Smith	Council Secretary	Ms. Smith will relate to the Chairman Louis Manuel. Please resend copy of letter to fax no.520-568-1001 (12/22/10 - 9.30am) Sent Fax on 12/22/10 -11.13
Augustine Band of (Cahuilla) Mission Indians			Chairwoman	Left voicemail with information in general voicemail box- Maryann Martin no longer works there (12/22/10 10.15 am)The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians		Ms. Karen Kupcha	Tribal Administrator	Left Voicemail with information (12/22/10 10.20 am)The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Barona Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Edwin Romero	Chairman	Offices Closed due to the flooding - left message for Mr. Romero (12/22/10 10.25am) The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians		Mr. John A. James	Chairman	Left Voicemail for Mr. James with information (12/22/10 10.40 am)The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians		Ms. Judy Stapp	Director of Cultural Affairs	No comment - spoke to Ms. Stapp (12/22/10 10.36am)
Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Anthony Madrigal, Jr.	Interim Chairman	Left Voicemail for Mr. Madrigal with information (12/22/10 10.48 am)The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Campo Kumeyaay Nation		Ms. Monique LaChappa	Chairwoman	Receptionist will relate message to Ms. La Chappa to call back (12/22/10 10.52 am) Left message with receptionist when through all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info (12/22/10.
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe		Ms. Lillian Parra	Executive Secretary / Tribal Administration Office	Defer to contact below.
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe		Mr. Charles Wood	Chairman	Left Voicemail for Mr. Wood with information (12/22/10 10.56 am)The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Cocopah Indian Tribe		Ms. Sherry Cordova	Chairwoman	Follow up contact by MCAS Yuma
Cocopah Indian Tribe		Ms. Jill McCormick	Historic Preservation Officer	Follow up contact by MCAS Yuma
Colorado River Indian Tribe		Mr. Eldred Enas	Chairman	Defer to contact below.
Colorado River Reservation		Mr. Rick Ench	Planning Consultant	Call back at 12-1 to discuss. Called at 1pm no one answered 12/22/10
Ewiaapaayp Tribal Office		Will Micklin	Executive Director	Left message 10:22 am 12/22/10. Message left on on their general line requesting my message be forwarded to the appropriate individual. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Ewiaapaayp Tribal Office		Michael Garcia	Vice-Chairman/EPA Director	Left message 10:22 am 12/22/10. Message left on on their general line requesting my message be forwarded to the appropriate individual. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation		Mr. Ruben Balderas	Council Member	No comment - Spoke with Mr. Balderas and he informed me that he and Dr. Pattea did not deal with public comments to projects and instructed me to address these questions to the cultural manger Ms. Ray.
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation		Ms. Karen Ray	Cultural Manager	Left message 10:09 am 12/22/10. Message left on Ms. Ray's voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation		Dr. Clinton M. Pattea	President	No comment - Spoke with Mr. Balderas and he informed me that he and Dr. Pattea did not deal with public comments to projects and instructed me to address these questions to the cultural manger Ms. Ray.
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe		Ms. Pamela Morago-Pratt	Community-at-large-Representative	Left message 10:05 am 12/22/10. Message left on general receptionist voicemail because number provided did not go directly to Ms. Morago-Pratt. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe	AhaMaKav Cultural Society	Ms. Linda Otero	Director	Spoke with here 1:30 pm 12/22/10. She asked if the base was conducted tribal consultation on this project and I informed her that the public review and scoping period was ongoing but coming to a close tomorrow. With regards to additional govt to govt (tribal) consultation I could not speak to that and that she should contact the base cultural specialist to discuss. I forwarded a copy of the letter to her as requested and let her know if she has any comments/concerns to please let me know and I will forward them on. I notify her of all the key points and website as well, which she was going to look at after my call. She said this base rarely consults with her regarding their projects. She provided no further information.

**CMAGR Tribal Contact List**

Fort Yuma Indian Reservation – Quechan Tribe		Ms. Bridget Nash-Chrabasz	Historic Preservation Officer	Follow up contact by MCAS Yuma
Fort Yuma Indian Reservation – Quechan Tribe		Mr. Mike Jackson, Sr.	President	Follow up contact by MCAS Yuma
Quechan Cultural Committee		Ms. Pauline Jose		Follow up contact by MCAS Yuma
Gila River Indian Community		Mr. Deron Rafael	Chairperson	Left message 11.20 am 12/22/10. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Inaja Band of Mission Indians		Ms. Rebecca Osuna	Spokesperson	Left message 9:32 am 12/22/10. Message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Jamul Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Leon Acevedo	Chairman	left voicemail - David Konopka URS AZ 12/22/10
Kumeyaay Cultural Heritage Preservation		Mr. Paul Cuero?		left a voicemail after being transferred- David Konopka URS AZ 12/22/10
Kumeyaay Cultural Historic Committee		Mr. Ron Christman		No one is answering the phone
Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee		Ms. Gevan Miller	Tribal Administrator	Left message 12.23 pm 12/22/10. Message left on Ms. Miller's voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Mission Indians		Ms. Carmen Lucas		left voicemail - David Konopka URS AZ 12/22/10
La Posta Band of Mission Indians		Ms. Gwendolyn Parada	Chairwoman	left voicemail with the tribal administrator - David Konopka URS AZ 12/22/10
Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians		Ms. Evelyn Duro	Tribal Administrator	They are not interested because it is out of their jurisdiction- David Konopka URS AZ 12/22/10
Manzanita Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Leroy J. Elliott	Chairman	Left message 12.23 pm 12/22/10. Message left on Mr. Elliott's voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Mark Romero	Chairperson	Left message 12.36 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Romero on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info. Tribe office will be closed from Thursday dec.23 to jan.3
Morongo Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Robert Martin	Chairman	Left message 12.46 pm 12/22/10. Left message on the voicemail of Ms. Christina Chartier - executive assistant for Mr. Martin. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Ramona Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians		Mr. Joseph Hamilton	Representative	Left message 12.56 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Hamilton on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community		Ms. Diane Enos	President	Left message 12.59 pm 12/22/10. Message for Ms. Enos on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info. Tribal office will be closed from Wed.22 1pm to Sunday and will re open 12/27.
San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians		Carmen Mojado	Secretary of Government Relations	No phone number available
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians		Mr. James Ramos	Chairman	No one is answering the phone
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians		Ms. Ann Brierty	Policy/Cultural Resource Department	No one is answering the phone
San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Allen E. Lawson	Chairman	Left message 2.17 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Lawson on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians		Mr. Anthony Largo	Chairman	Left message 2.08 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Largo on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Sycuan Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Danny Tucker	Chairman	Office is closed until 3/1/11, could not leave message 12/22/10 2.30pm
Santa Ysabel Band of Diegueno Indians		Mr. Clint Linton		Left message 2.02 pm 12/22/10. Left message Mr. Linton's voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Santa Ysabel Band of Diegueno Indians		Mr. Virgil Perez	Chairman	Left message 2.00 pm 12/22/10. Left message Mr. Perez' voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Tohono O'odham Nation		Mr. Ned Norris	Chairman	Left message 1.54 pm 12/22/10. Left message on the voicemail of Ms. Roberta Harvey - executive assistant for Mr. Norris. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians		Mr. Rolland Ferrer	Cultural Resources Coordinator	Left message 1.26 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Ferrer on his voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians		Mr. Alberto Ramirez	Environmental Coordinator	Left message 1.26 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Ramirez on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians		Mr. Raymond Torres		no longer works there
Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians		Mr. Joseph R. Benitez		Left message 1.25 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Benitez on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.

**CMAGR Tribal Contact List**

Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians		Ms. Mary Resvaloso	Chairperson	Left message 1.23 pm 12/22/10. Message for Ms. Resvaloso on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Jeffrey Smith	EPA	Defer to comment below. Decided to not leave message since I had already left it previously for Mr. Martin 12/22/10 1.19pm
Twentynine Palms Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Darrell Mike	Chairman	Left message 1.16 pm 12/22/10. Left message on the voicemail of Ms. Leana Thomas - executive assistant for Mr. Martin . The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.
Viejas Band of Mission Indians		Mr. Anthony R. Pico	Chairperson	Left message 1.11 pm 12/22/10. Message for Mr. Pico on the general voicemail. The message included all 3 points as well as MCAS contact info.

**APPENDIX C**  
**PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING MATERIALS**

Sign-in Sheets  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Comment Form  
Presentation Boards

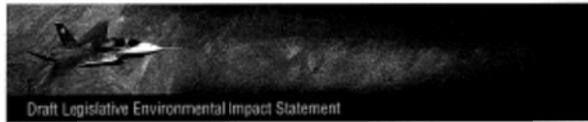


**Date:** 6 DEC 2010

<b>Name</b> <small>(please print clearly)</small>	<b>Agency/Organization</b> <small>(if applicable)</small>
Anna Pinnell	U.S. Bur Reclamation
Julian DeSantiago	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Nancy Meister	Public
Cory Meister	Yuma Audubon Society
* Lauren Faul	Marstel Day



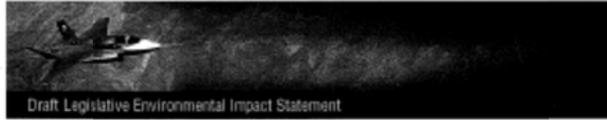
Sign-in Sheets from CMAGR Public Meetings



Date: 7 DEC. 2010 - EL CENTRO

Name <small>(please print clearly)</small>	Agency/Organization <small>(if applicable)</small>
LARRY SMITH	CITIZEN
Joseph RODRIGUES	South West Prospectors + MINERS IV GEM + MINERAL
* Daniel Stevard	BLM El Centro
Kendal Kamsay	
Betty and Vernon Bergfalk	Citizens
John PYLE JR	IVGMS
Charla Teeters	UDG
Charlene Wardlow	Ormat

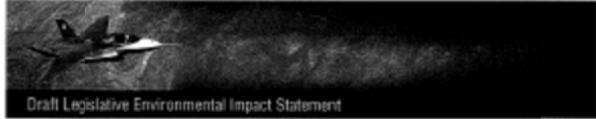
Sign-in Sheets from CMAGR Public Meetings



Date: 7 DEC 2010 - EL CENTRO

Name <small>(please print clearly)</small>	Agency/Organization <small>(if applicable)</small>
EDDIE MEALEY Kathleen Medcalf	MEALEY CONST CO.
FRANK MEDCALF	
HANK KUIPER	
LUIS A. PLANCATE	WESTERN MOSQUITO MINES CO
EARNEST NELSON	
Sue Giller	Valley Solutions Group

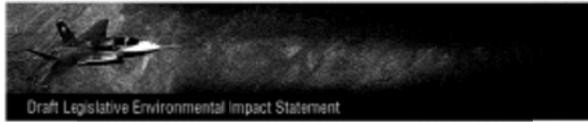
Sign-in Sheets from CMAGR Public Meetings



**Date:** 8 DEC 2010 - PALM SPRINGS

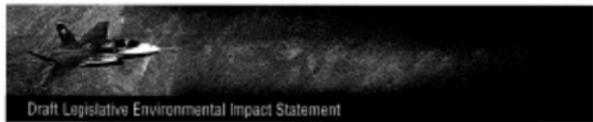
<b>Name</b> <small>(please print clearly)</small>	<b>Agency/Organization</b> <small>(if applicable)</small>
PAMELA Richard Black	
Elizabeth Eastby	BLM
Greg Magnusson	NAVFAC SW

Sign-in Sheets from CMAGR Public Meetings



Date: 9 DEC 2010 - SAN DIEGO

Name <small>(please print clearly)</small>	Agency/Organization <small>(if applicable)</small>
Jerry CANNING	CITIZEN
DANIEL McCroskey	Pomas
Emily Green	Citizen
* Charles Bradshaw	Mental Day
MIKE WAGER	CITIZEN
Sheryl Wager	Citizen
Scott Penwell	Citizen
DAVID MARTINOSLY	CITIZEN
BARBARA Allen	citizen



Date: 9 DEC 2010 SAN DIEGO

Name <small>(please print clearly)</small>	Agency/Organization <small>(if applicable)</small>
Jeff Saker	CITIZEN
NANCY GRAYSON	CITIZEN
Elizabeth Nedetz	URS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is the CMAGR, where is it located, and who “owns” the land?

Located on approximately 458,827 acres in southeastern California, the CMAGR is a component of the larger Bob Stump Training Range Complex (BSTRC). The BSTRC comprises approximately 1.2 million acres in southwest Arizona and southeast California and provides the training opportunities that take an airman from basic, individual training through complex exercises that integrate multiple ground and air force units, simulated enemy fire, and the chaos that may be encountered in combat.

The Department of the Navy owns about half of the CMAGR land and the balance of the range is managed by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), but withdrawn from uses permitted under the public land laws and reserved for military training. The Navy delegated responsibility to manage the CMAGR to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma in 1981.

### What is the CMAGR land withdrawal and why is it being renewed now?

In accordance with Federal laws<sup>1</sup>, BLM lands may be made available for national defense purposes through a process that withdraws the land from settlement, sale, location, or entry under some or all of the public land, mining, and mineral laws. The withdrawal limits or prohibits activities that are normally permitted and reserves them for specified military purposes. Congressional legislative action is required for land withdrawals for national defense purposes that total more than 5,000 acres.

The most recent land withdrawal legislation<sup>2</sup> renewed the withdrawal of the about 226,711 acres of BLM lands within CMAGR for 20 years, and expires in 2014. The current withdrawal legislation requires the Secretary of the Navy to publish a Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) in 2012 if he finds that there will be a continuing military need for the CMAGR after 2014. The LEIS will address the proposed renewal of the CMAGR, and evaluate alternatives that propose adjustments to its boundary and changes to BLM and Department of the Navy management responsibilities for the range. A summary of the preliminary alternatives identified to date for the renewal of the CMAGR is provided on page 2.

The Draft LEIS will be published for public review and comment and the Final LEIS, which will address the comments on the draft, will be submitted to Congress as part of the Department of the Navy’s application to Congress for the renewal of the CMAGR.

### What training occurs and will occur in the future at the CMAGR?

The CMAGR is a live-fire tactical aviation training range that is of paramount importance to the Marine Corps for preparing its pilots and other aircrew to function, survive, and fight as individual warriors and as members of the Marine Air Ground Task Force. Training in all aspects of aerial warfare occurs at the CMAGR but, in particular, it is the premier Marine Corps range for air-to-ground attack training using live explosive ordnance. Aircrew training at the CMAGR includes air-to-air tactics; close air support of friendly ground forces; laser targeting system operations; air-to-air gunnery; and air-to-ground bombing, rocket, and strafing attacks. Ground troops that perform air defense, air control and communications, and other air-ground combat missions also train at the CMAGR. The only regularly occurring, land-based training that is not directly related to tactical aviation is conducted by Naval Special Warfare Group 1 for Navy SEALs (Sea Air Land). The SEALs use portions of the range for desert warfare training.



Imagery provided by MCAS Yuma Public Affairs Office

### Why is public access to the CMAGR prohibited?

The fundamental purpose of the CMAGR is to provide a location where effective military training can occur without exposing the public or their property to dangerous activities or hazardous conditions. The public is also excluded from the range to prevent interference or disruption of training and support operations, and to provide appropriate security to government activities and property. Although not all of the CMAGR is directly used as weapons firing or target impact areas, hazards from unexploded ordnance, laser targeting operations, or other current or past military activities may be encountered almost anywhere in the range. Safety buffers are required so that malfunctioning, misdirected, or unintentionally released aircraft ordnance may impact without harm to persons or property.

<sup>1</sup> Engle Act of 1958, Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976

<sup>2</sup> California Desert Protection Act of 1994

## SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES FOR RENEWING THE CMAGR

	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5
<b>Terms of Renewal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>• Retain split DoN-Dol management</li> <li>• Keep existing boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>• Consolidate management under DoN</li> <li>• Adjust boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>• Transfer Dol lands and management to DoN</li> <li>• Adjust boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>• Retain split DoN-Dol management</li> <li>• Adjust boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take no action</li> <li>• Allow range withdrawal to expire</li> <li>• Range not renewed</li> </ul>
<b>Duration and Means of Range Renewal</b>	Renew by land withdrawal and reservation for 25 years	Same as Alternative 1	Renew by transferring Dol land to DoN—no expiration	Same as Alternative 1	Range not renewed
<b>Military Purposes</b>	Range reserved for training, testing, and other related defense purposes; USMC responsible for military operations	Same as Alternative 1	Range established for training, testing, and other related defense purposes; USMC responsible for military operations	Same as Alternative 1	CMAGR military operations would end; planning begins for transfer of training operations and range clean up
<b>Other Permitted Uses</b>	Lands withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, but BLM may issue rights-of-way with DoN concurrence	Lands withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, but DoN may authorize other uses compatible with military purposes	DoN assumes land jurisdiction and may authorize other uses compatible with military purposes	Same as Alternative 1	BLM may issue rights-of-way; concurrence of DoN would be required until range rendered safe for public use and disposition of DoN lands determined
<b>Resources Managed by DoN</b>	Natural and cultural resources of DoN parcels managed per Sikes Act and other applicable law	Natural and cultural resources of entire range managed per Sikes Act and other applicable law	Same as Alternative 2	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1 until final disposition of DoN parcels determined
<b>Resources Managed by BLM</b>	Natural and cultural resources of Dol parcels managed per FLPMA and other applicable law	BLM not involved in active management role, but has underlying jurisdiction for Dol lands	BLM no longer has any management role or underlying jurisdiction	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Range Boundary</b>	Boundary remains unchanged	Boundary adjusted and USMC assumes responsibility for managing acquired Dol lands and BLM assumes responsibility for Dol lands not renewed	Same as Alternative 2	Same as Alternative 2	Boundary no longer defines an active military range, but demarcates a post-range planning and clean-up area

BLM = Bureau of Land Management  
 CMAGR = Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range  
 DoI = Department of the Interior

DoN = Department of the Navy  
 FLPMA = Federal Land Policy Management Act  
 USMC = United States Marine Corps



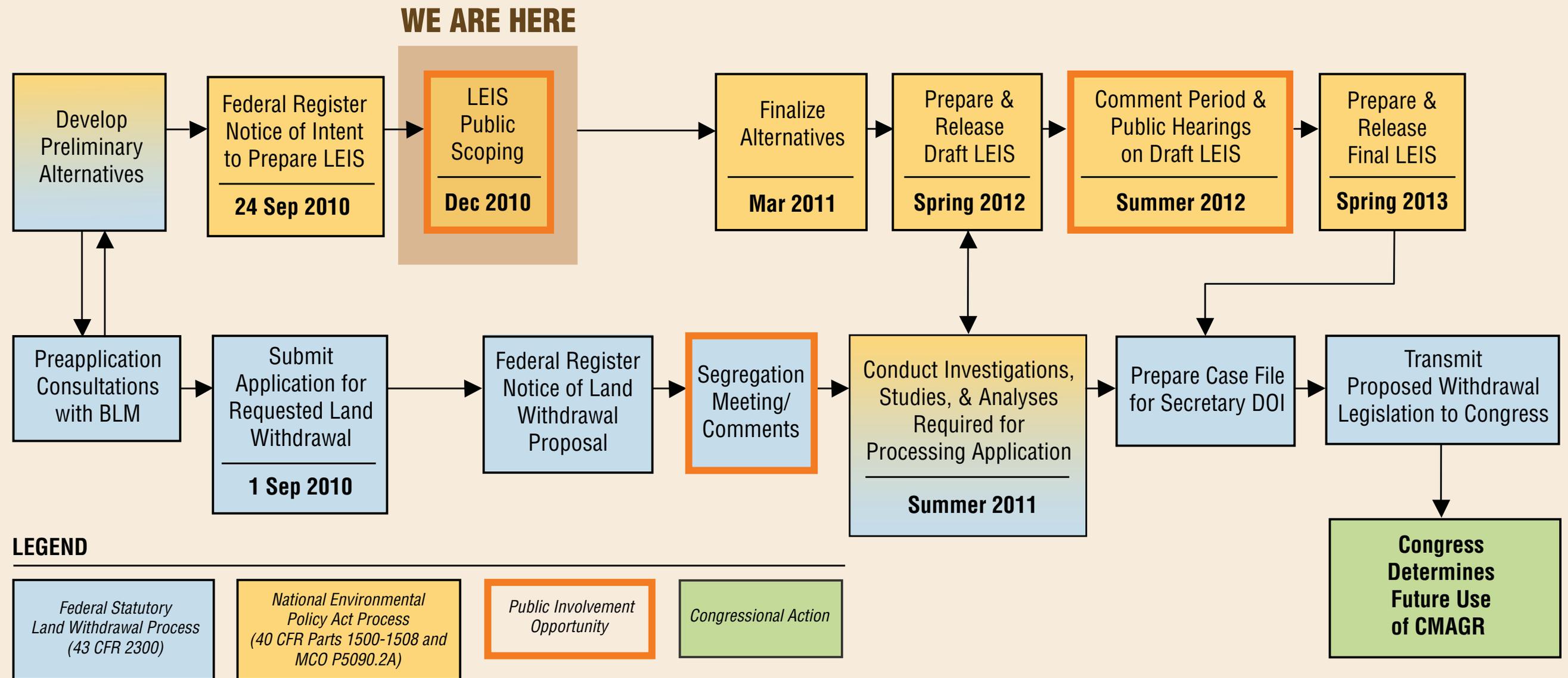




# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



## FEDERAL LAND WITHDRAWAL AND NEPA PROCESSES FOR RENEWAL OF THE CMAGR



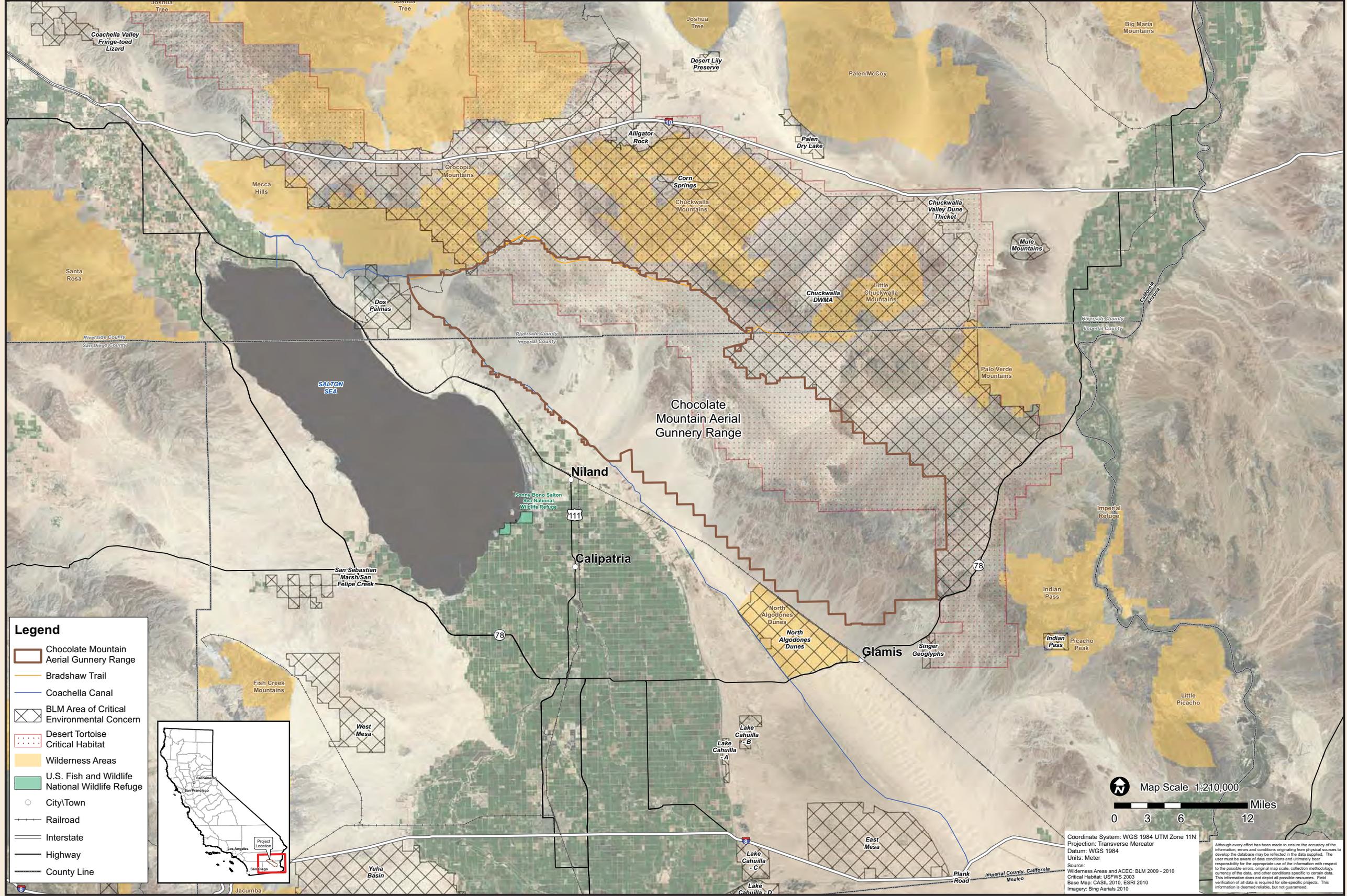
BLM = Bureau of Land Management  
 CFR = Code of Federal Regulations  
 CMAGR = Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range  
 DOI = Department of the Interior  
 LEIS = Legislative Environmental Impact Statement  
 MCO = Marine Corps Order  
 NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act



# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



## VICINITY MAP

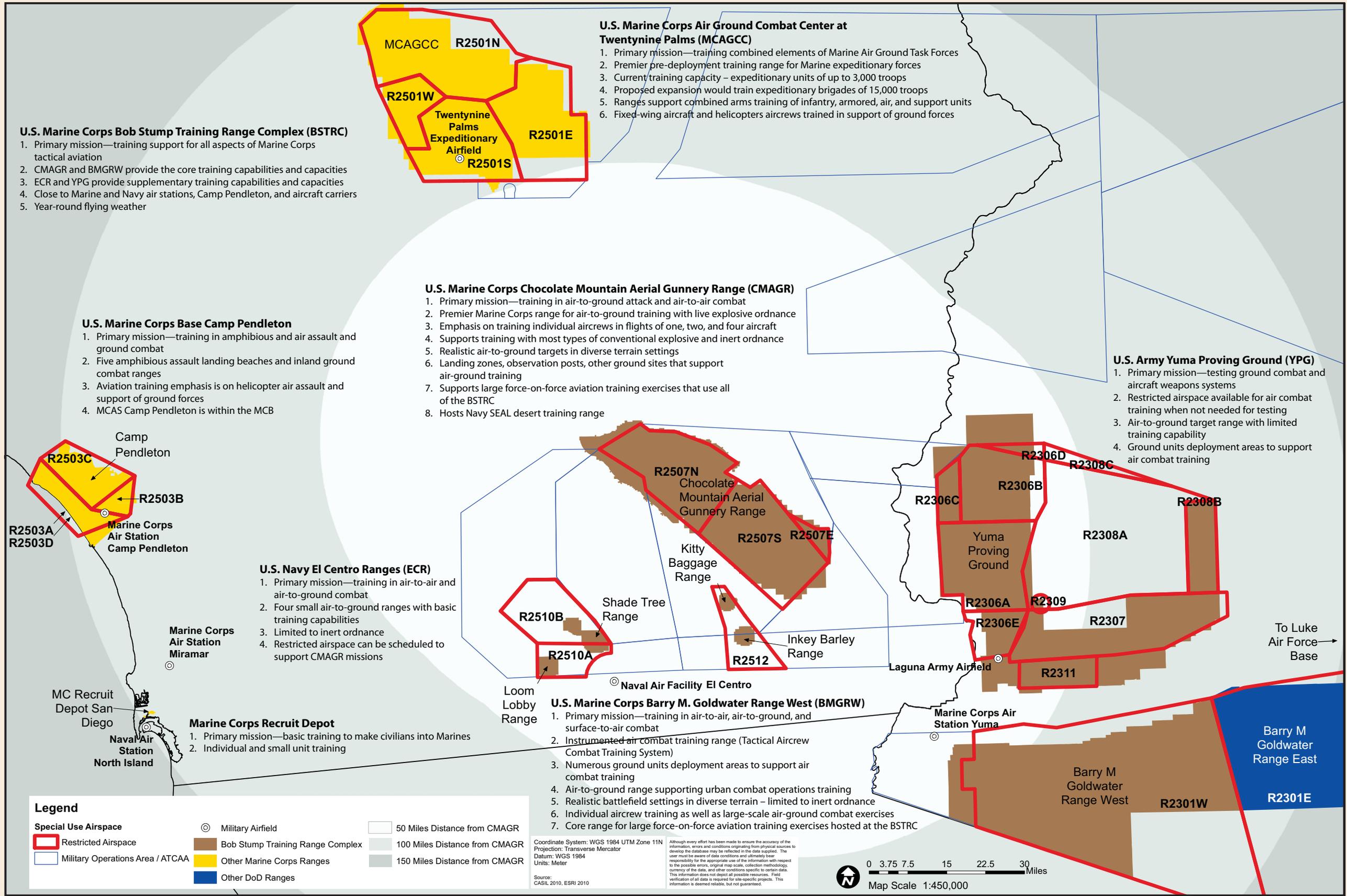




# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



## MILITARY RANGES IN THE CMAGR OPERATING REGION

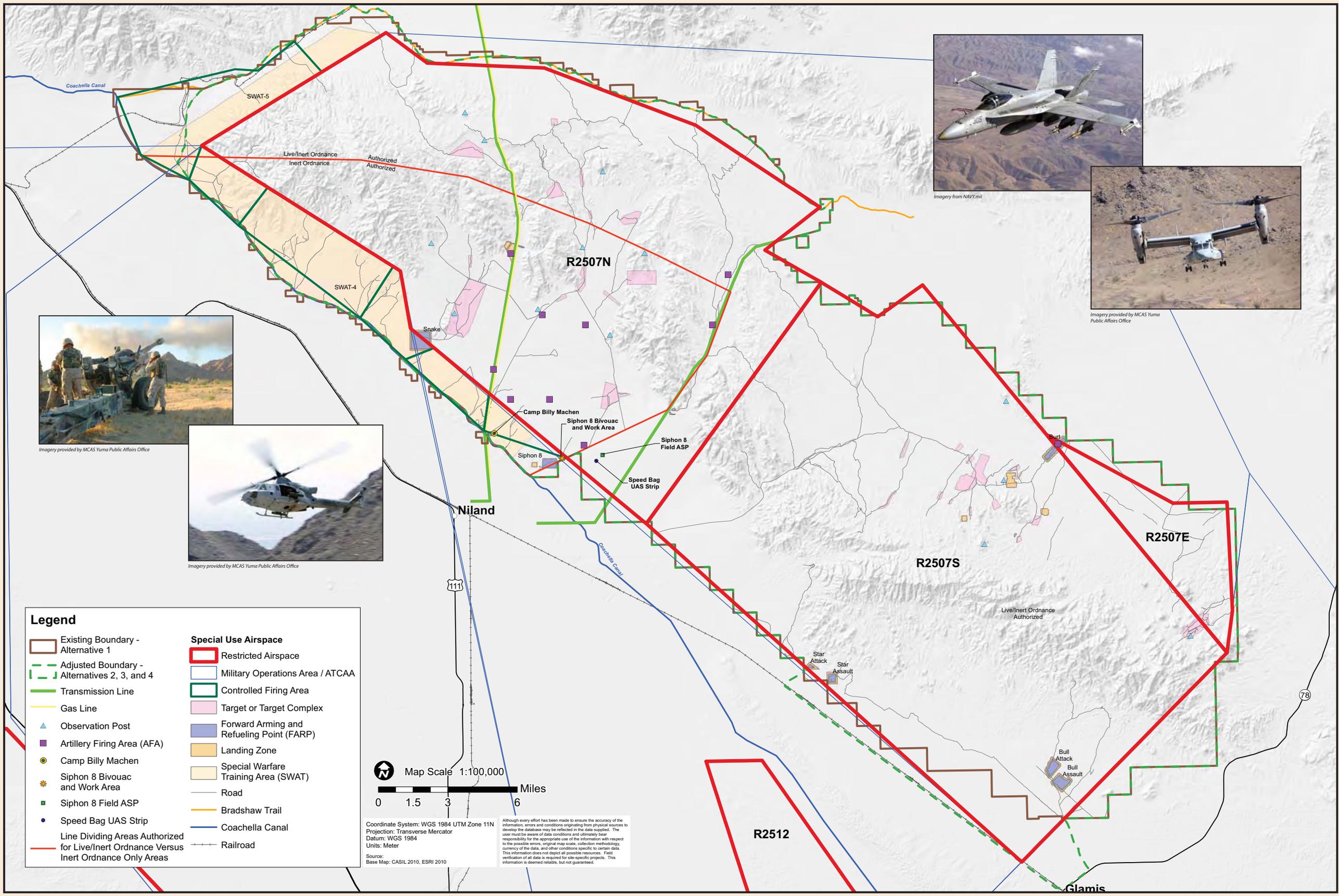




# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



## TRAINING SUPPORT FACILITIES



Legend	
Existing Boundary - Alternative 1	<b>Special Use Airspace</b>
Adjusted Boundary - Alternatives 2, 3, and 4	Restricted Airspace
Transmission Line	Military Operations Area / ATCAA
Gas Line	Controlled Firing Area
Observation Post	Target or Target Complex
Artillery Firing Area (AFA)	Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP)
Camp Billy Machen	Landing Zone
Siphon 8 Bivouac and Work Area	Special Warfare Training Area (SWAT)
Siphon 8 Field ASP	Road
Speed Bag UAS Strip	Bradshaw Trail
Line Dividing Areas Authorized for Live/Inert Ordnance Versus Inert Ordnance Only Areas	Coachella Canal
	Railroad

Map Scale 1:100,000  
0 1.5 3 6 Miles

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 11N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: WGS 1984  
Units: Meter

Source:  
Base Map: CASIL 2010, ESRI 2010

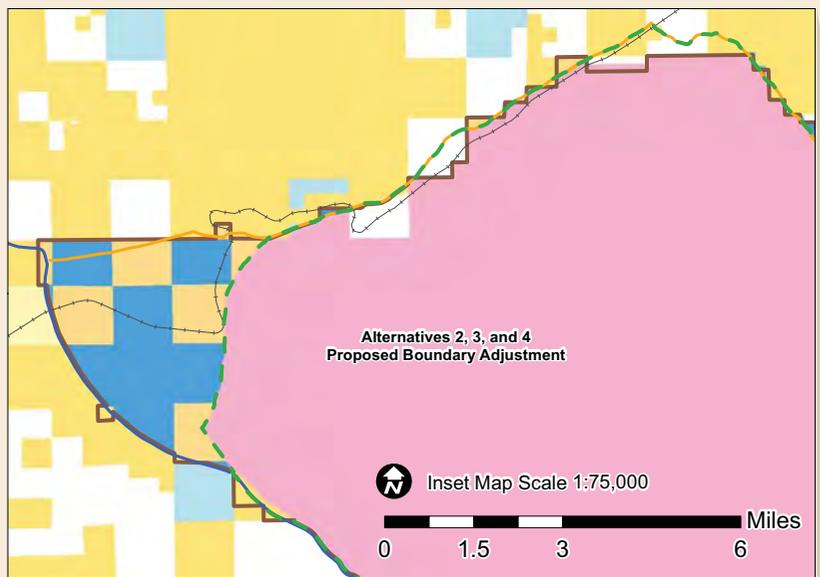
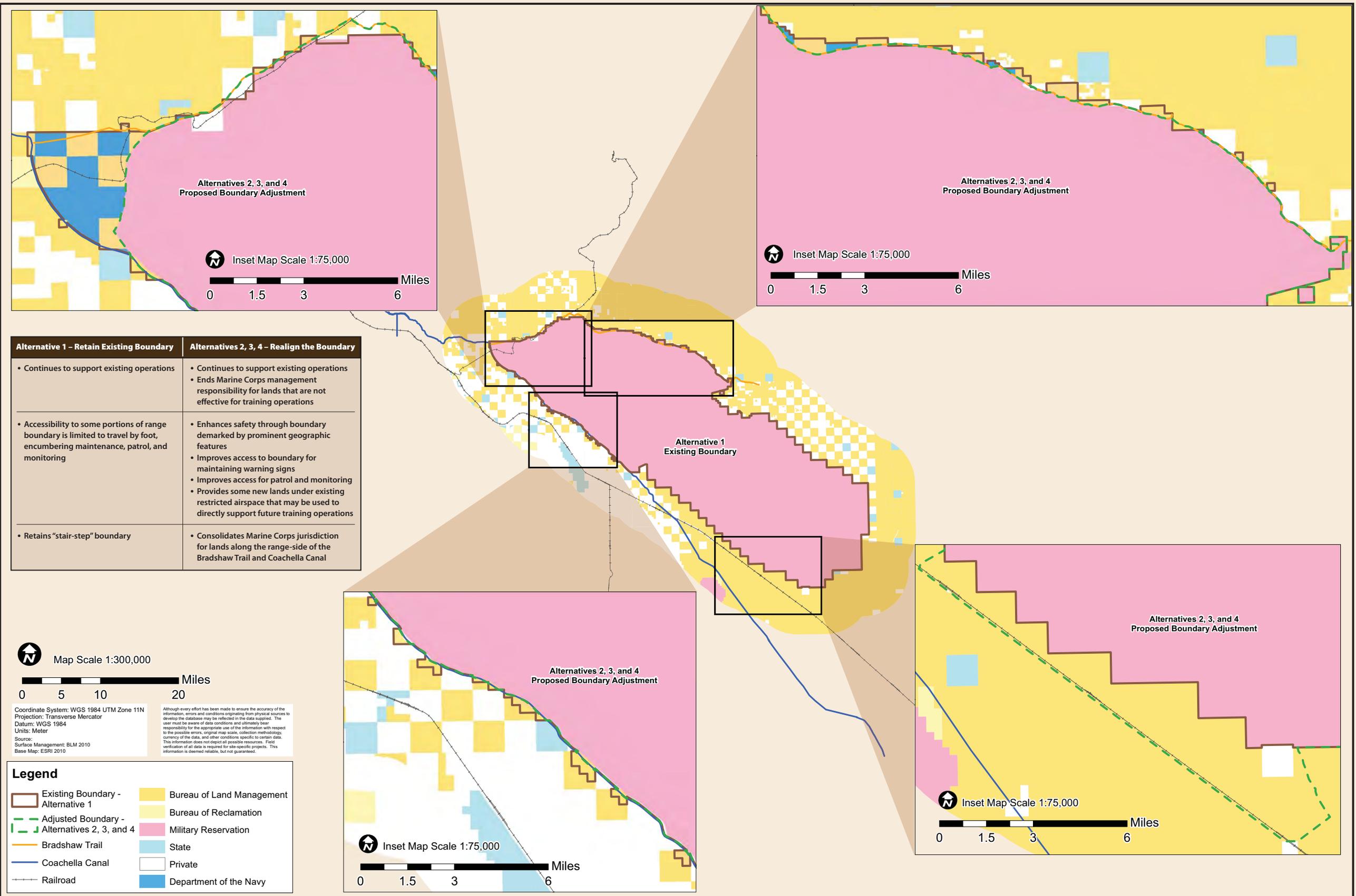
Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, errors and conditions originating from physical sources to develop the database may be reflected in the data supplied. The user must be aware of data conditions and ultimately bear responsibility for the appropriate use of the information with respect to the possible errors, original map scale, collection methodology, currency of the data, and other conditions specific to certain data. This information does not depict all possible resources. Field verification of all data is required for site-specific projects. This information is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.



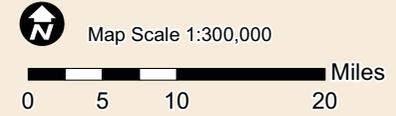
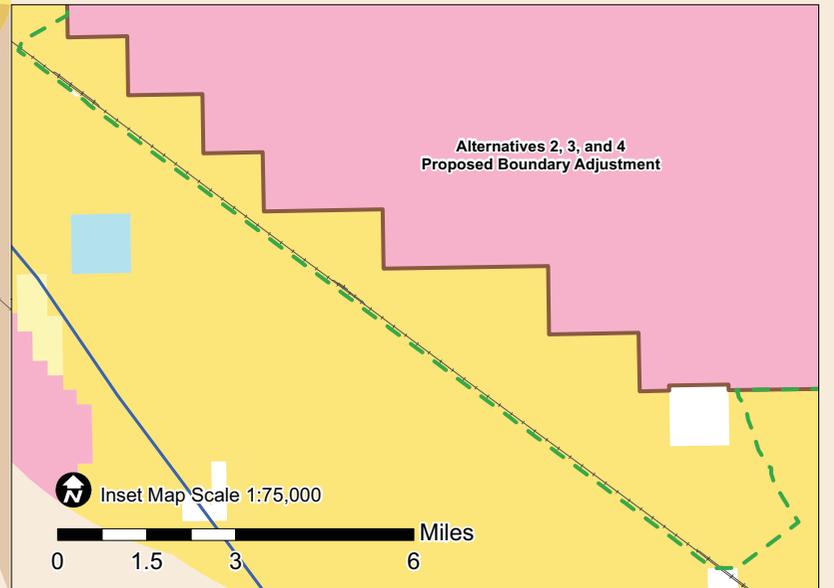
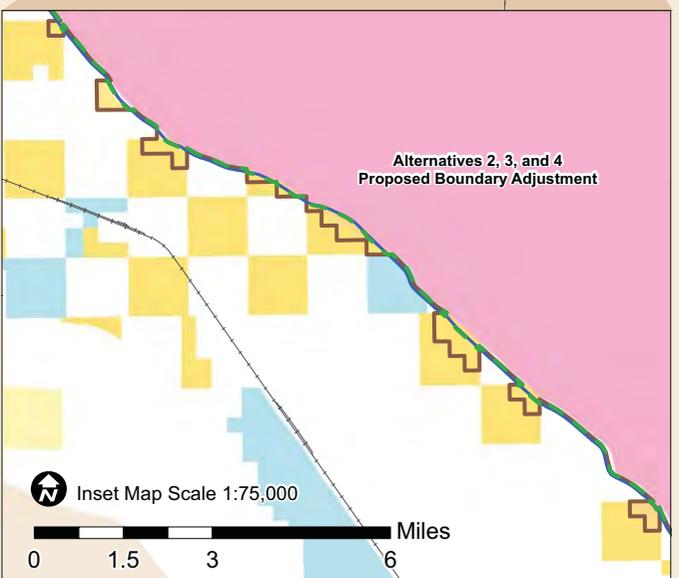
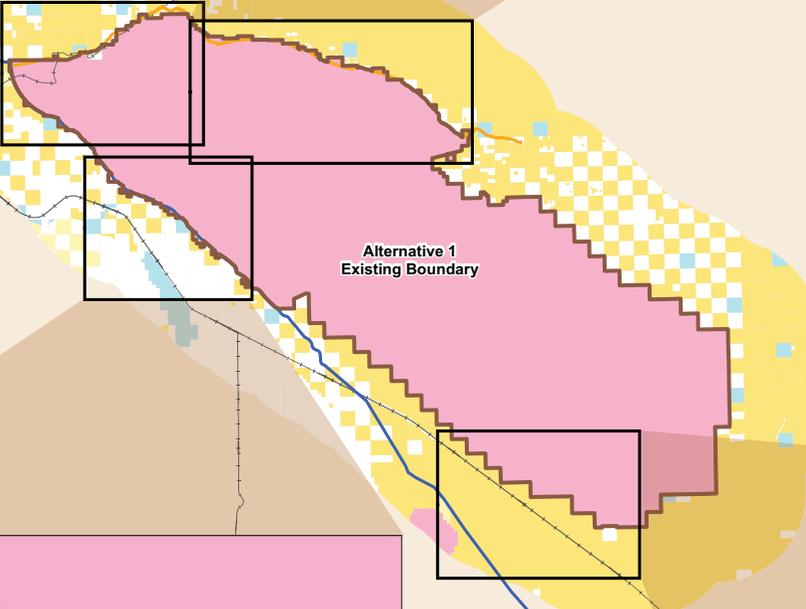
# Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Proposed Land Withdrawal Renewal



## PROPOSED CMAGR BOUNDARIES



Alternative 1 - Retain Existing Boundary	Alternatives 2, 3, 4 - Realign the Boundary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continues to support existing operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continues to support existing operations</li> <li>Ends Marine Corps management responsibility for lands that are not effective for training operations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility to some portions of range boundary is limited to travel by foot, encumbering maintenance, patrol, and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhances safety through boundary demarked by prominent geographic features</li> <li>Improves access to boundary for maintaining warning signs</li> <li>Improves access for patrol and monitoring</li> <li>Provides some new lands under existing restricted airspace that may be used to directly support future training operations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retains "stair-step" boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidates Marine Corps jurisdiction for lands along the range-side of the Bradshaw Trail and Coachella Canal</li> </ul>



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 11N  
 Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Datum: WGS 1984  
 Units: Meter

Source:  
 Surface Management: BLM 2010  
 Base Map: ESRI 2010

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, errors and conditions originating from physical sources to develop the database may be reflected in the data supplied. The user must be aware of data conditions and ultimately bear responsibility for the appropriate use of the information with respect to the possible errors, original map scale, collection methodology, currency of the data, and other conditions specific to certain data. This information does not depict all possible resources. Field verification of all data is required for site-specific projects. This information is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

**Legend**

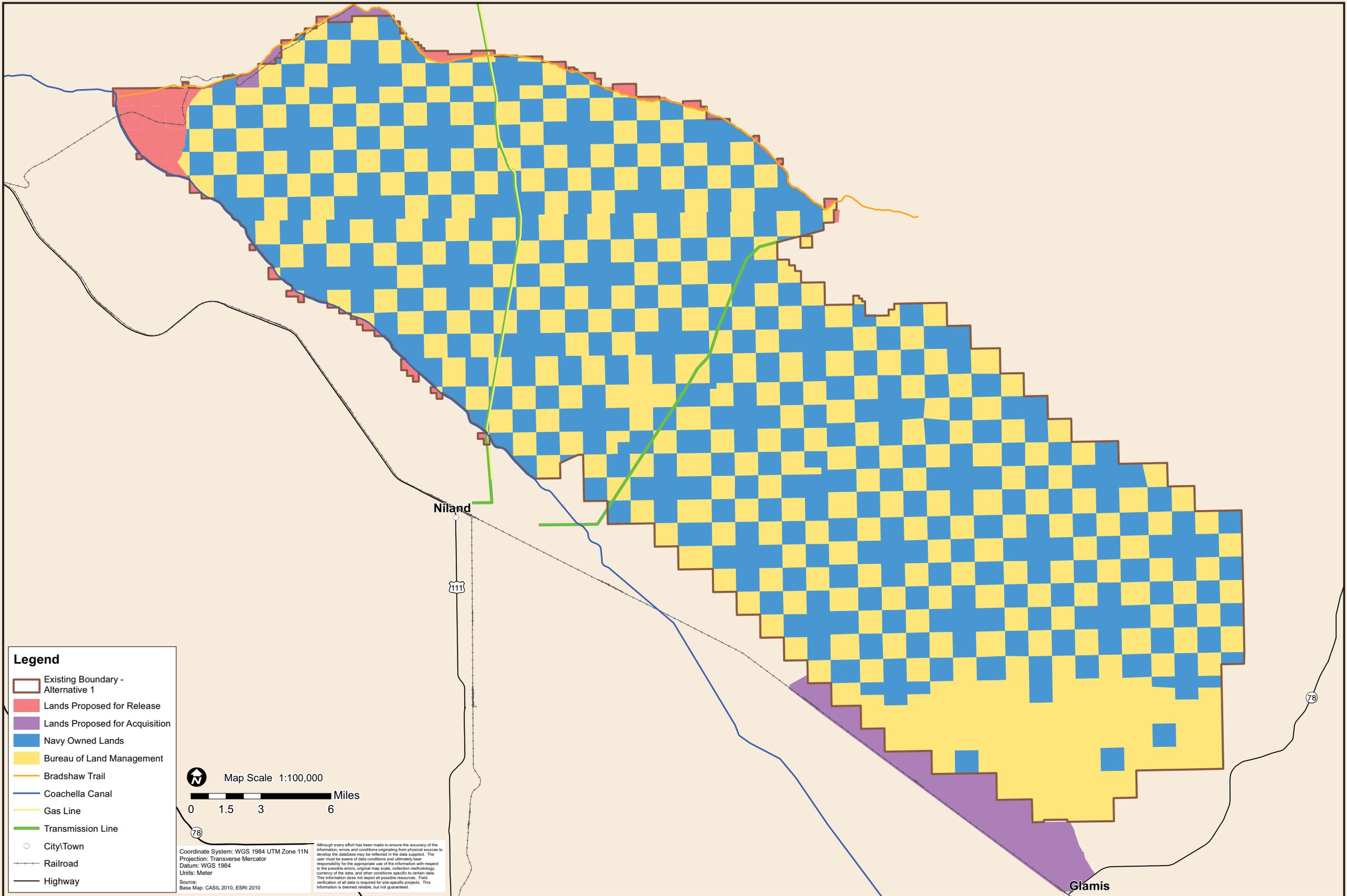
Existing Boundary - Alternative 1	Bureau of Land Management
Adjusted Boundary - Alternatives 2, 3, and 4	Bureau of Reclamation
Bradshaw Trail	Military Reservation
Coachella Canal	State
Railroad	Private
	Department of the Navy



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## CMAGR LAND JURISDICTIONS





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## SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES FOR RENEWING THE CMAGR

	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5
<b>Terms of Renewal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>Retain split DoN-DoI management</li> <li>Keep existing boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>Consolidate management under DoN</li> <li>Adjust boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>Transfer DoI lands and management to DoN</li> <li>Adjust boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renew range withdrawal</li> <li>Retain split DoN-DoI management</li> <li>Adjust boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take no action</li> <li>Allow range withdrawal to expire</li> <li>Range not renewed</li> </ul>
<b>Duration and Means of Range Renewal</b>	Renew by land withdrawal and reservation for 25 years	Same as Alternative 1	Renew by transferring DoI land to DoN—no expiration	Same as Alternative 1	Range not renewed
<b>Military Purposes</b>	Range reserved for training, testing, and other related defense purposes; USMC responsible for military operations	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1	CMAGR military operations would end; planning begins for transfer of training operations and range clean up
<b>Other Permitted Uses</b>	Lands withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, but BLM may issue rights-of-way with DoN concurrence	Lands withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, but DoN may authorize other uses compatible with military purposes under BLM oversight	DoN assumes all land jurisdiction and may authorize other uses compatible with military purposes	Same as Alternative 1	BLM may issue rights-of-way; concurrence of DoN would be required until range rendered safe for public use and disposition of DoN lands determined
<b>Resources Managed by DoN</b>	Natural and cultural resources of DoN parcels managed per Sikes Act and other applicable law	Natural and cultural resources of entire range managed per Sikes Act and other applicable law	Same as Alternative 2	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1 until final disposition of DoN parcels determined
<b>Resources Managed by BLM</b>	Natural and cultural resources of DoI parcels managed per FLPMA and other applicable law	BLM not involved in active management role, but has underlying jurisdiction for DoI lands	BLM no longer has any management role or underlying jurisdiction	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Range Boundary</b>	Boundary remains unchanged	Boundary adjusted; USMC assumes responsibility for managing acquired DoI lands and BLM assumes responsibility for DoI lands not renewed	Same as Alternative 2	Boundary adjusted; BLM retains responsibility for managing acquired and non-renewed DoI lands and USMC manages released DoN lands (until final disposition determined)	Boundary no longer defines an active military range, but demarcates a post-range planning and clean-up area

BLM = Bureau of Land Management  
 CMAGR = Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range  
 DoI = Department of the Interior

DoN = Department of the Navy  
 FLPMA = Federal Land Policy Management Act  
 USMC = United States Marine Corps



# LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (LEIS) STUDIES

The LEIS Process includes analysis of potential impacts on the environment. Topics to be addressed in the LEIS include:



**Land Use**



**Water**



**Social and Economic Conditions/  
Environmental Justice**



**Vegetation**



**Noise**



**Wildlife**



**Public Utilities**



**Protected Species**



**Air Quality**



**Cultural Resources**



**Geology/Soils**



**Safety**



**Range Operations and Airspace**



**Hazardous Materials and Waste**

Imagery provided by MCAS Yuma Public Affairs Office