



Yuma Proving Ground Highway 95 Addition Withdrawal Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement Virtual Public Meeting

Phone Line: 571-616-7941

Meeting ID: 642 621 638#

Project website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>

Please mute yourself to reduce feedback and background noise.

Use *6 to mute/unmute the phone.

For technical assistance, use Chat box (computer) or *5 (phone).

Un intérprete de español está disponible durante la sesión de preguntas y respuestas.





Virtual Meeting Rules

- If you have any questions or issues, please let us know in the chat box or press *5 on the phone now.
- Feel free to enter questions in the chat box anytime.
- Participants' phone lines and audio will be muted throughout the meeting to reduce feedback and background noise, unless we call on you.
- Please be respectful and courteous. Any objectionable or rude language will be grounds for removal from the meeting.
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Meeting Purpose

- ✓ To provide an opportunity for the public to obtain information about the Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) prepared by the Department of the Army (Army) Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM).
- ✓ To ask questions and submit comments on the Draft LEIS during the Q&A portion of the meeting and have them answered by the available subject matter experts.
- ✓ Nothing in today's meeting constitutes a promise and/or an agreement.



Draft LEIS Meeting Agenda

- ✓ Meeting Protocol
- ✓ Welcome and Introductions
- ✓ Presentation
- ✓ Question and Answer
- ✓ How to Comment
- ✓ Closing





Welcome

- **Welcome from Colonel Jonathon Nelson,
Yuma Proving Ground Commander**
- **Welcome from Ray Castro,
BLM Yuma Field Office Manager**





Colonel Jonathon W. Nelson

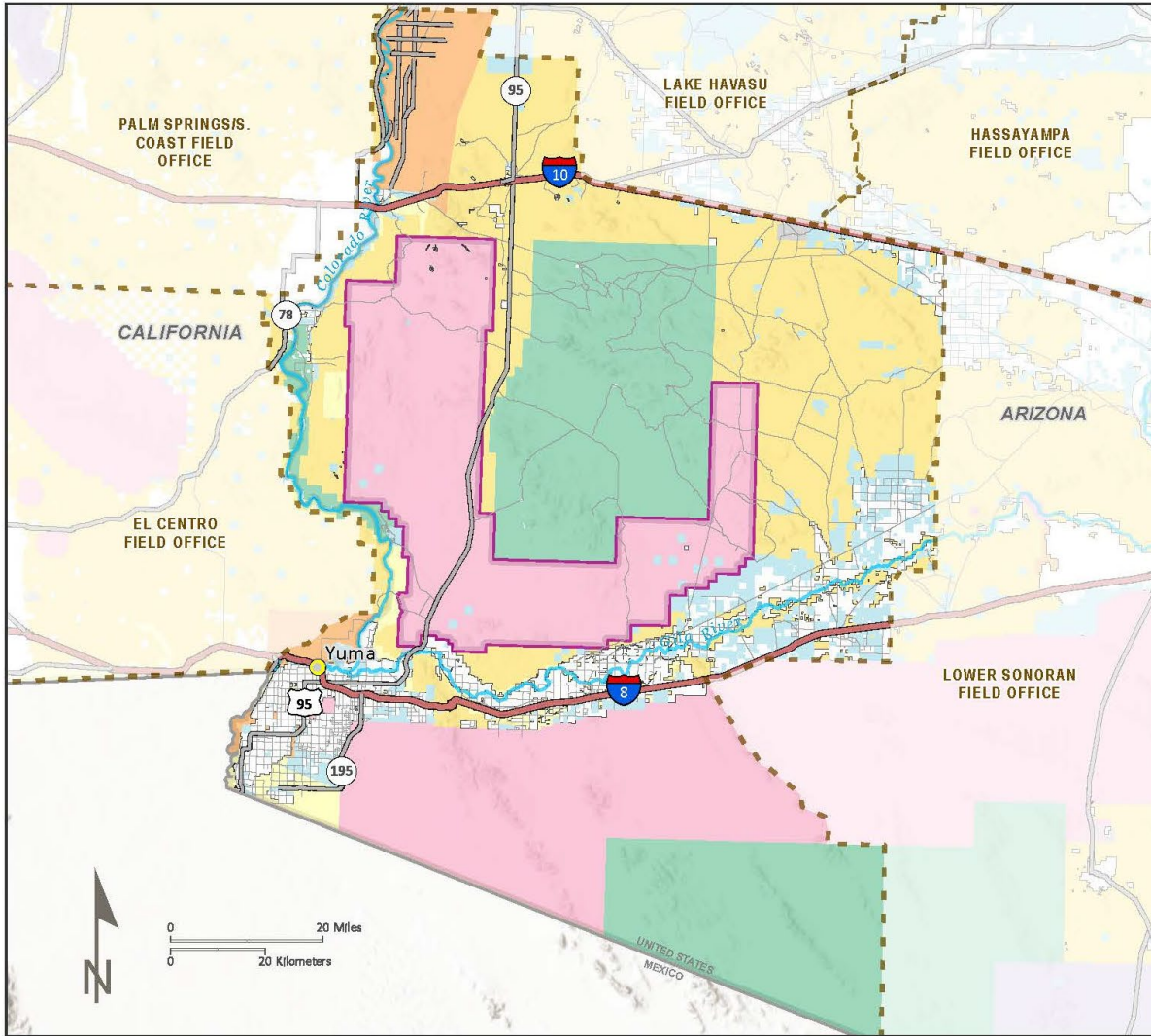
U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

Senior Commander

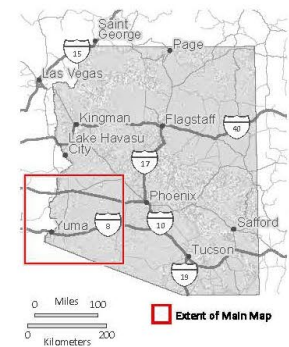


Yuma Field Office BLM

Welcome from Ray Castro, BLM Yuma Field Manager



- Yuma Proving Ground
- City
- River
- County or Major Route
- Interstate Highway
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- BLM Field Office Boundary
- State boundary
- Surface Management Agency
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - County
 - Tribal/Reservation Lands
 - Local or State Parks
 - Military
 - National Park Service
 - Other Federal
 - Private
 - State
 - State Wildlife Area
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service

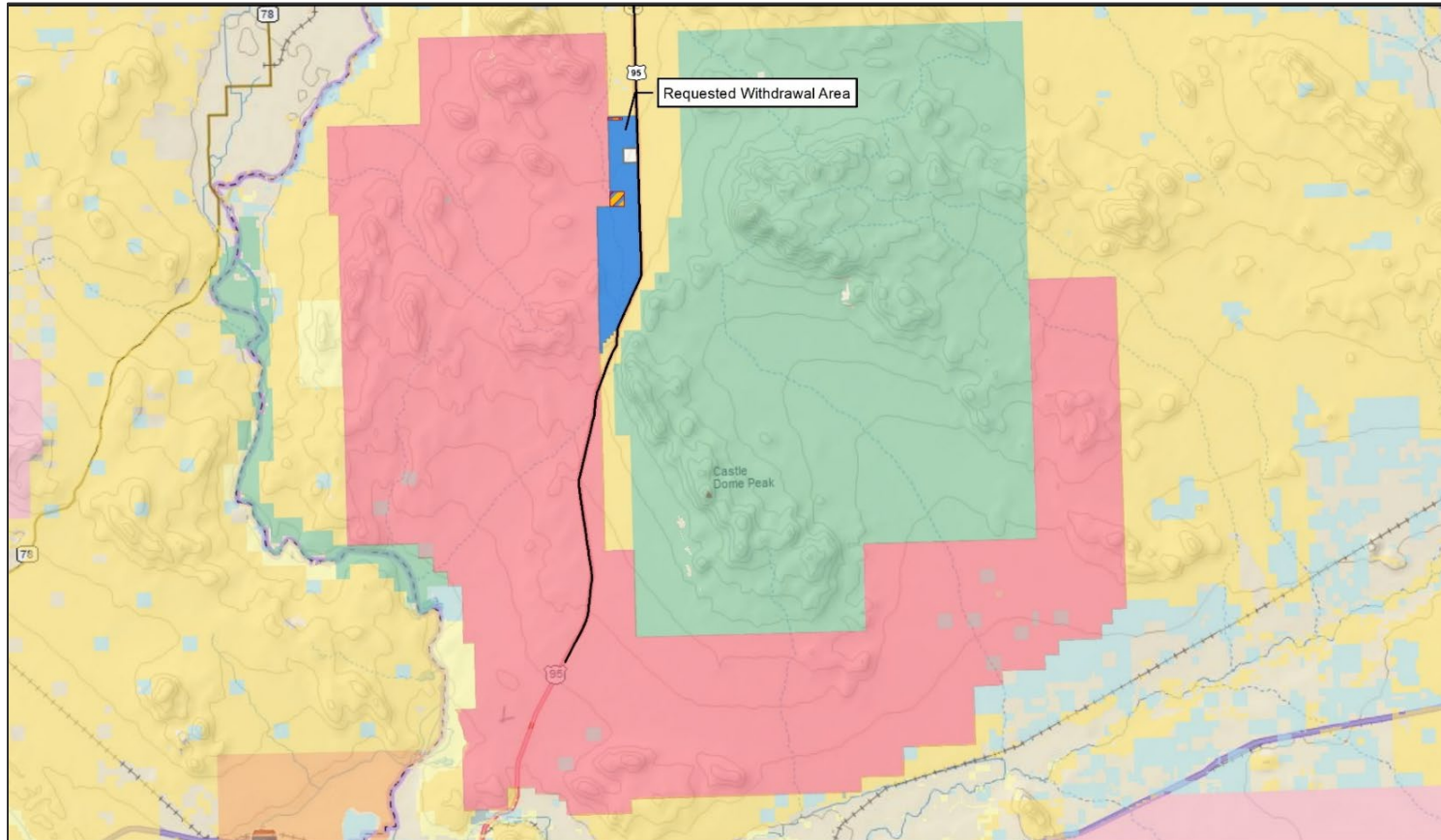


Map Produced by BLM Arizona State Office
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 12N
 Scale: 1:1,260,000 at 8.5x11 page output
 Date: 3/21/2024

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

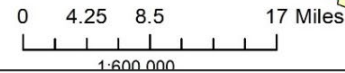


Yuma Proving Ground



Legend

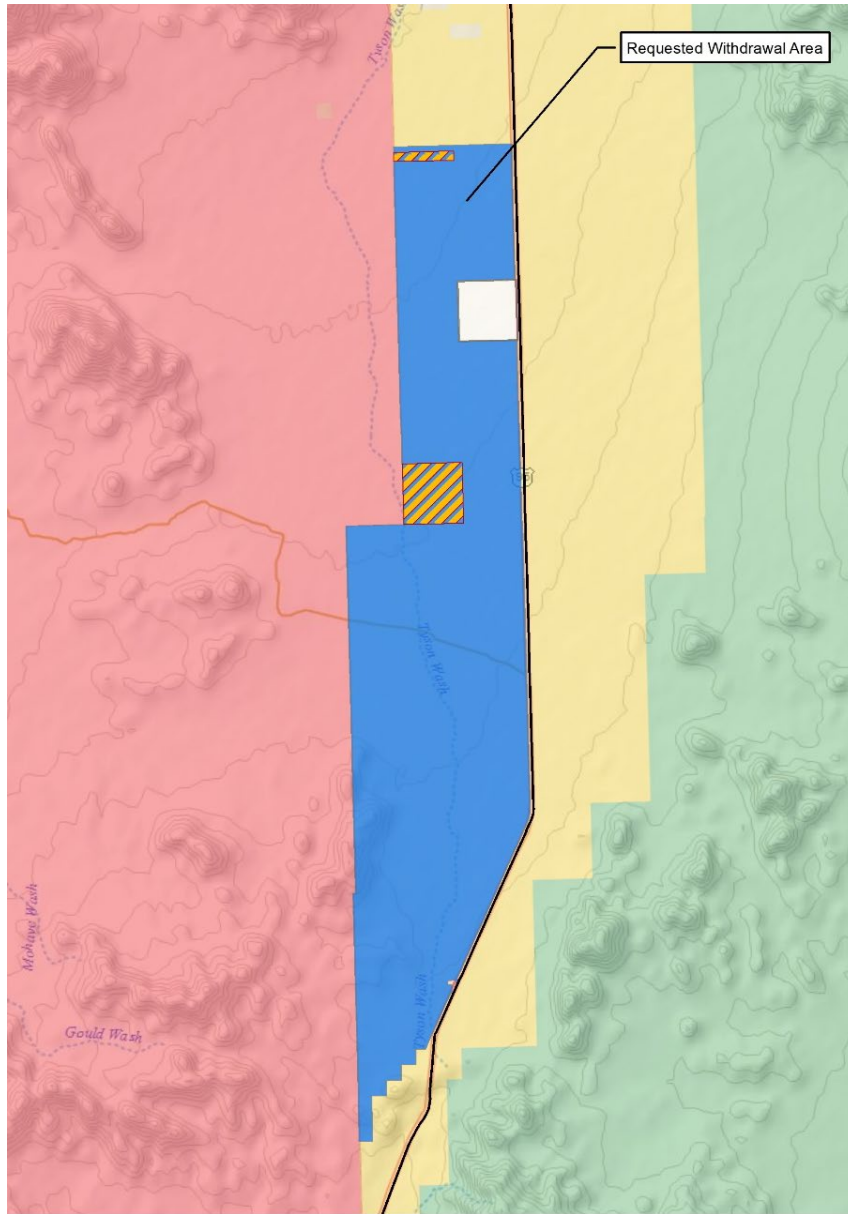
-  Non-Federal Land
-  Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
-  Surface Only Withdrawal
-  US Fish and Wildlife (USFW)
-  Requested Withdrawal Area
-  YPG



Date: 4/14/2009



Requested Withdrawal Area



- Adds approximately 22,000 acres to the 830,000-acre YPG.
- Runs from approximately Mile Marker 74 to Mile Marker 91 along Highway 95.
- A nonfederal entity owns the subsurface rights to 800 acres.
- Additionally, there are 640 acres of private lands that are excluded from the withdrawal area.

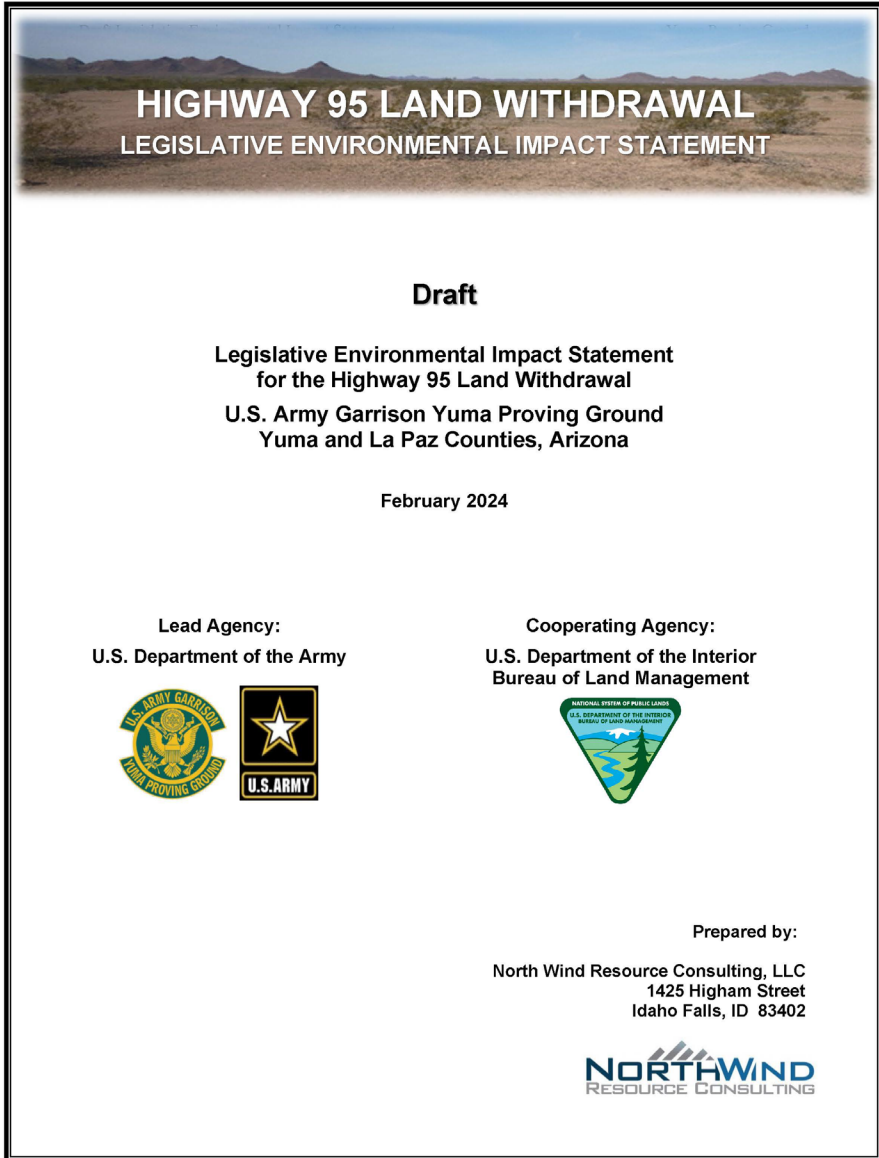


What is a Withdrawal?



- Army's 22,000-acre YPG Highway 95 withdrawal application received by BLM.
- BLM processes Federal land withdrawal per:
 - Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) regulations (43 CFR 2300)
 - The Engle Act of 1958 (43 U.S.C. 155-158)
- A withdrawal means that, if approved, the requested lands are reserved for use by the Army and would no longer be subject to public land laws and mining-related laws that may allow a use or development, such as a mine, which may interfere with the Army's requested parachute air delivery safety buffer use. A withdrawal is subject to valid existing rights.





HIGHWAY 95 LAND WITHDRAWAL
LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Draft


Legislative Environmental Impact Statement
for the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal
U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground
Yuma and La Paz Counties, Arizona

February 2024

Lead Agency:
U.S. Department of the Army

Cooperating Agency:
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Prepared by:
North Wind Resource Consulting, LLC
1425 Higham Street
Idaho Falls, ID 83402



YPG has prepared a Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

An LEIS is a document, prepared in accordance with NEPA, that discloses environmental impacts of a proposed action.

Congress makes the final decision, so it is a “Legislative” EIS and there is no Record of Decision (ROD).

The final decision is part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

National Environmental Policy Act

- Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Lead agency: Army.
- Cooperating agency: Bureau of Land Management (BLM).
- Public participation: Native American Tribes; federal, state, and local governments; and members of the public.
- The LEIS analyzes impacts from the proposed action and alternatives.



Army Withdrawal LEIS Process

- September 2022, the Army published the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register providing public scoping period.
- Our team prepared the Draft LEIS incorporating comments received in scoping.
- Army published the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register in March 2024 announcing the availability of the Draft LEIS for review.
- Public comment period is being held so the public can review and comment on the Draft LEIS.
- Army will incorporate comments and prepare a Final LEIS.
- LEIS and application case file is presented to Congress through BLM.



LEIS Timeline



Fall 2022 Fall 2022 2023 2024

We are here



Spring 2024 Summer 2024 Fall 2024 Winter 2024 2026



Three Alternatives are Considered in the LEIS

- **Proposed Action:** Withdrawal of approximately 22,000 acres of BLM land for military purposes for an indefinite period.
- **Alternative 1-Withdrawal of Shorter Duration:** Withdrawal would be the same as the Proposed Action, but for a defined period (i.e., 25 years).
- **No Action Alternative:** No change from existing conditions. Allows the Army to compare alternatives and potential environmental impacts.

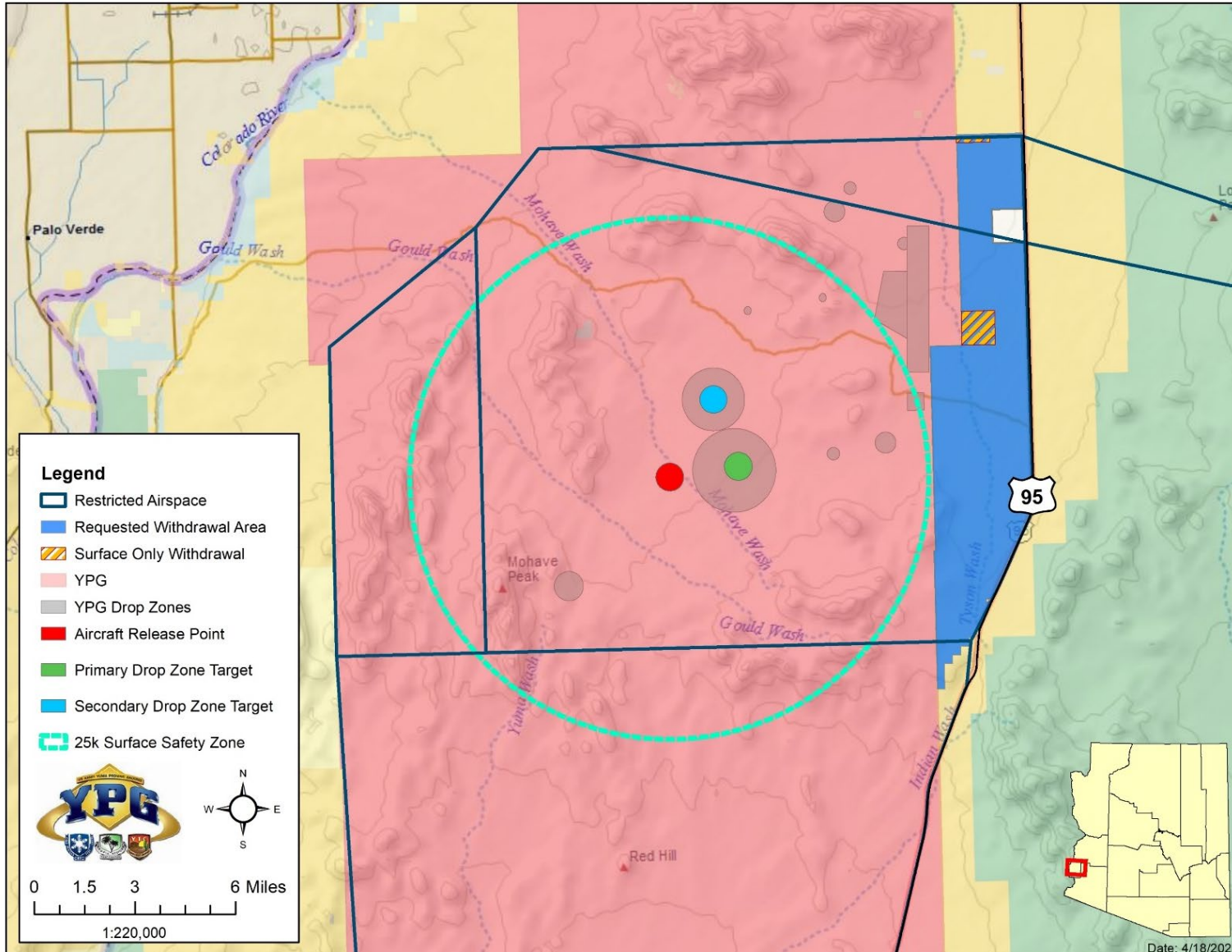


Purpose and Need in the LEIS

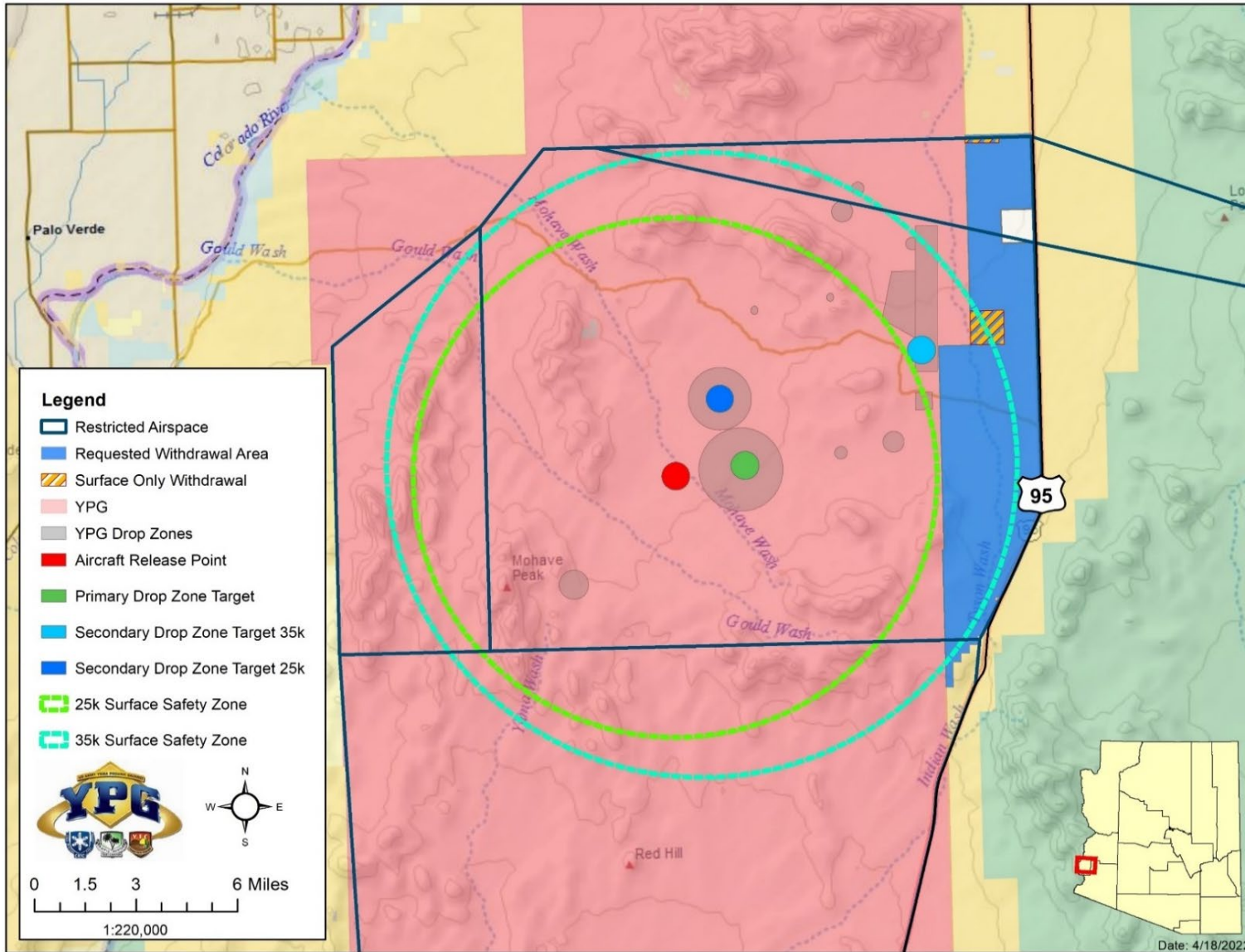
- The purpose of this action is to expand YPG's Cibola Range high altitude airdrop testing capabilities and ensure public safety by Congress withdrawing and reserving these public lands adjacent to the eastern border of the YPG Cibola Range.
- Expansion of the withdrawal at YPG is needed to adequately support current and emerging testing and training requirements for advances in Global Positioning System (GPS)-guided parachute air delivery technology and tactical scenarios that necessitate a higher airdrop altitude, greater target offsets, and increased aircraft speed.



Existing Situation: Current Capability



Proposed Action: Additional Capability



Proposed Action



- Withdrawal of approximately 22,000 acres of BLM-managed public lands.
- Reserved for military purposes.
- Indefinite period or until there is no longer a military need for the land.
- Allows other uses, such as public or Tribal use, that are compatible with Military Mission.
- Future land use authorizations, to include the overlapping Parker-Blaisdell utility corridor, would still fall under BLM authority. BLM would consult with the Army on any future non-defense related applications.

Other Alternatives Analyzed in the Draft LEIS

Alternative 1: Withdrawal would be the same as the Proposed Action, but for a defined period (i.e., 25 years).

Extensions would require:

- BLM processing of the withdrawal application
- Congressional approval

No Action Alternative: No Withdrawal

- Airdrop altitude would not increase
- Army would not expand test capability
- Does not meet the modern military/YPG Mission requirements

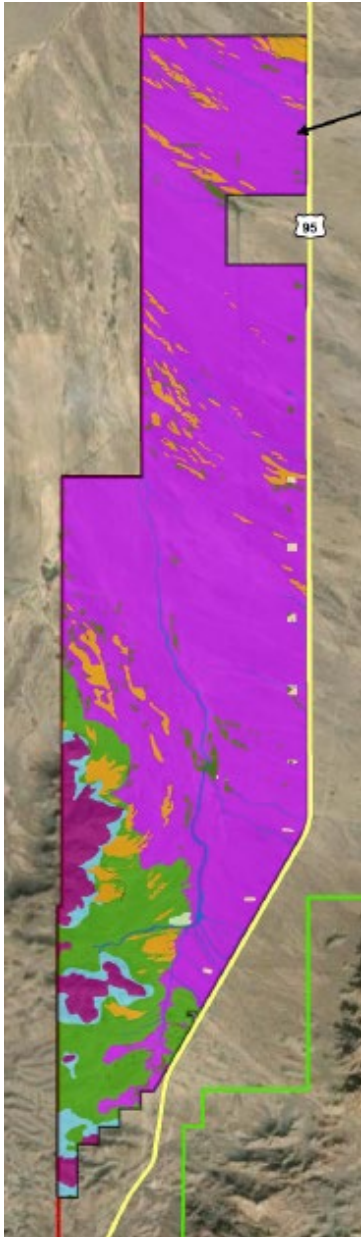
Summary of Environmental Impact Analysis

Chapter 3 of the Draft LEIS presents analysis of biological and cultural resources and social and land use issues. Elements analyzed in this LEIS include:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Existing Land Use
- Recreation and Public Access
- Socioeconomic Values and Environmental Justice



Biological Resources



- The Biological Resources section of the LEIS describes vegetation and wildlife within the requested withdrawal area, including special status species.
 - The vegetation community is dominated by creosote with some mountainous terrain in the southwest portion. Washes are an important feature, supporting increased vegetation and important wildlife habitat.
 - Several special status species have potential to occur in the project area including Sonoran pronghorn, Sonoran Desert tortoise, and monarch butterfly. Table 3-4 of the LEIS contains information about other Species of Greatest Conservation Need, Migratory Birds, and BLM Sensitive Species.
- No significant impacts to biological resources would occur because the area would be used as a safety buffer. There could be short-term localized impacts if recovery of errant parachute loads occurs.
- The Army would be responsible for management of natural resources under the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan.



Cultural Resources

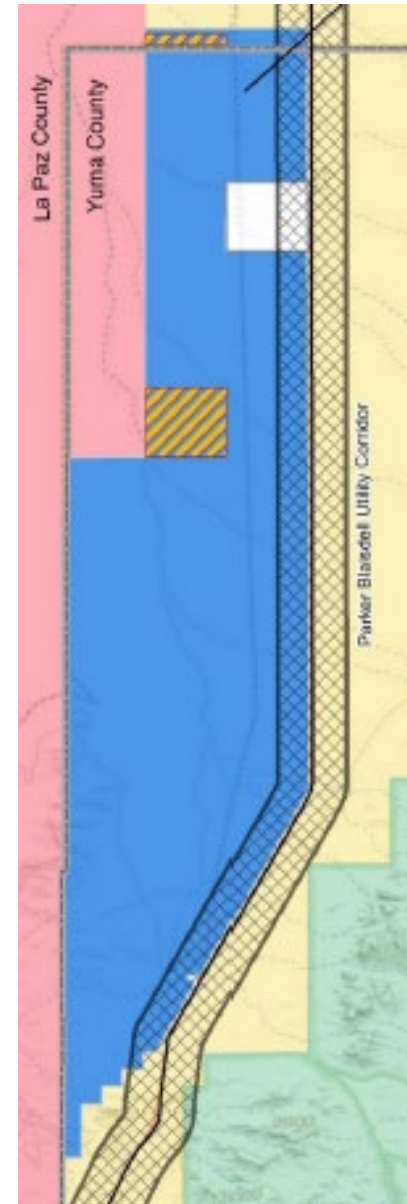
- The Cultural Resources section of the Draft LEIS discusses the policies and programs relevant to cultural resource protection for the withdrawal area.
- Transfer of management of the withdrawn land would not result in an “alteration to the characteristics of a historic property qualifying it for inclusion in or eligibility for” the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 800.16).
- Withdrawal area would remain in federal ownership and any cultural resources that may be present would continue to be subject to the same protections and requirements.
- The Army would manage cultural resources under the Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP).
- Tribal groups affiliated with this area are consulted with in accordance with the Tribal consultation protocols for activities on YPG in the ICRMP.



Existing Land Use



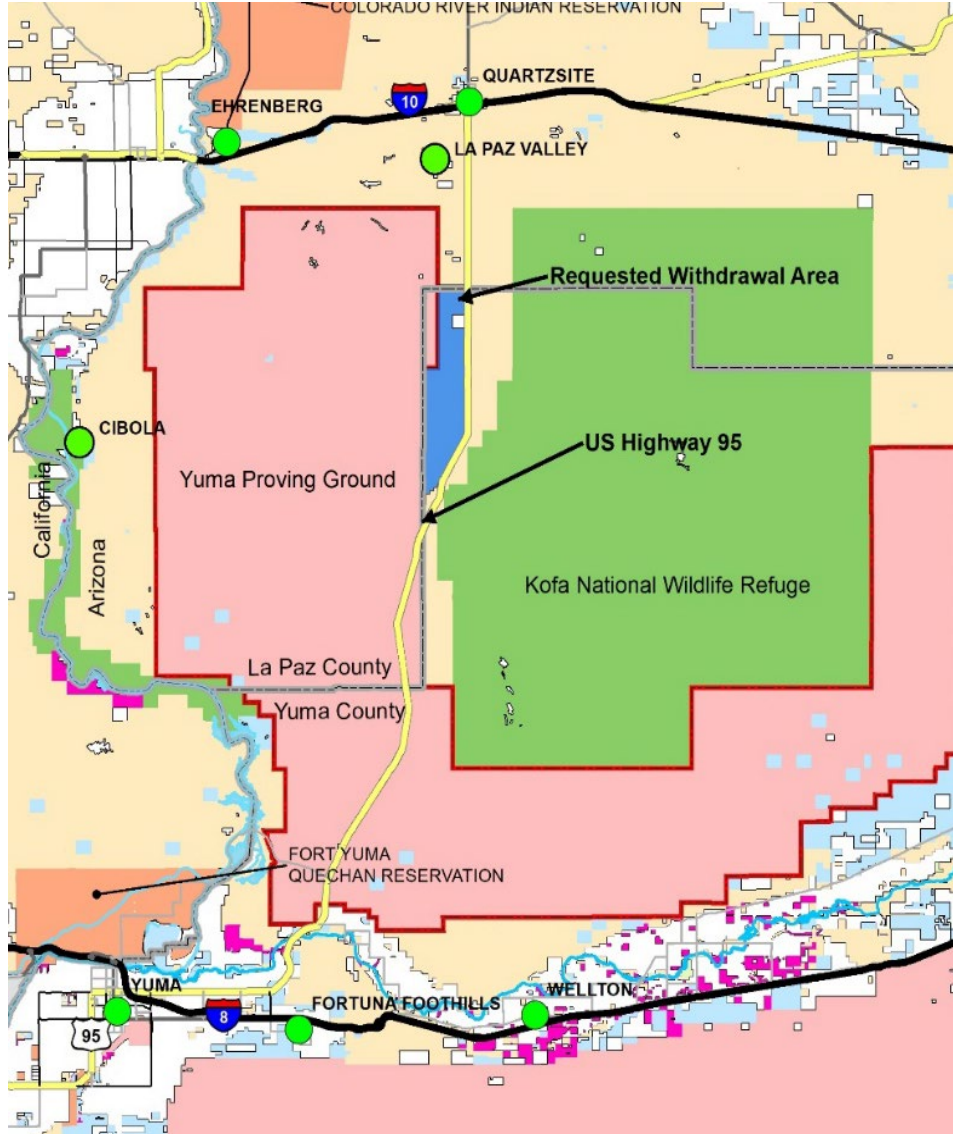
- There are six rights of way for roads and/or utilities within the requested withdrawal area.
- Future access would be limited in accordance with YPG range access procedures. Cibola Lake Road would remain as a public access road.
- Parker-Blaisdell Utility Corridor covers eastern ½ mile of project area
- Currently there is no mining and a low potential for mineral resources.
- There would be no significant impacts because it would be subject to valid existing rights. BLM would retain administrative authority for the area and would coordinate with the Army for any future authorizations.



Recreation and Public Access

- Current recreational use of the area is minimal and dispersed and includes hunting and off-highway vehicle riding.
- The withdrawal would reduce public access. Use of the area as a safety buffer would preclude most recreational use because it would interfere with the scheduling of air delivery testing schedules. Recreational use and access would be regulated to the extent necessary to safeguard public health and safety.
- Under the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, hunting would continue to be allowed through the YPG Hunting Program. As a result, there would be no significant effects to recreation, given the current minimal non-hunting related recreational uses.





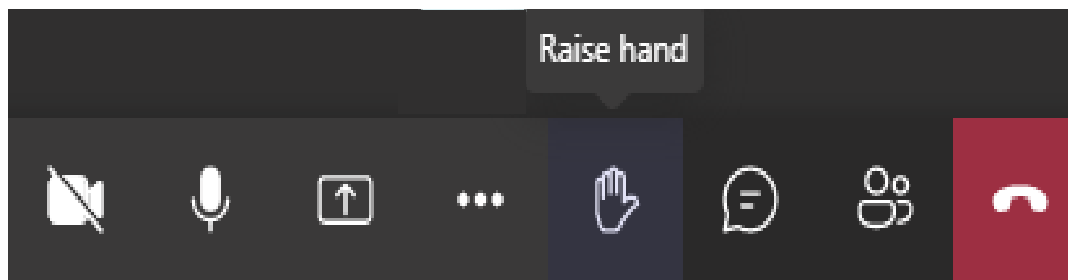
- ✓ The LEIS summarizes the socioeconomic characteristics of La Paz and Yuma Counties and representative towns and Census Designated Places within these counties near YPG.
- ✓ Communities surrounding YPG are directly and indirectly affected by economic factors related to YPG and its operations.
- ✓ An increased workforce is not anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action.
- ✓ The requested withdrawal area is located at sufficient distance from populated areas such that there would be no disproportionate impacts to low income or minority populations.



Public Comment and Question and Answer Portion

Instructions:

- Phone Line: **571-616-7941**, Meeting ID: **642 621 638#**
- To raise your hand, use ***5** on your phone or the “raise hand” tool.
- When called upon, use ***6** to unmute on the phone or click the microphone on the computer.
- Please introduce yourself before stating your comment or question.
- Each speaker has a 2-minute time limit for questions or comments.
- Use ***5** to lower your hand after you ask your question or click “lower hand” on the computer.
- If you have questions during a comment, please use the chat feature.
- Be respectful and courteous.
- Questions submitted during the Q&A session are not an official public comment.



How to Comment Effectively

The Army invites the public to review the Draft LEIS and welcomes comments that are substantive to the accuracy and adequacy of the environmental impact analysis. Submitting substantive and concise comments during the comment period is an important role the public plays in the NEPA process.

Substantive comments do one or more of the following:

- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the LEIS.
- Question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analyses.
- Present new information relevant to the analyses.
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the LEIS.
- Suggest changes or revision in one or more of the alternatives.

Comments on the Draft LEIS are due by April 15, 2024

- Please email comments to usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil to be included in the LEIS project record and considered in the Final LEIS.



For Further Information and to Download the Draft LEIS

The Army is committed to facilitating public, stakeholder, and Tribal input and dialogue to ensure a complete environmental analysis and informed decision-making.

For more information check the project website:

<https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>

Or contact Daniel Steward at Yuma Proving Ground:
(928) 328-2125

usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can request to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that it will not be disclosed.

