

# HIGHWAY 95 LAND WITHDRAWAL LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## Scoping Summary Report for the Yuma Proving Ground Highway 95 Land Withdrawal

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U.S. Department of the Army



Cooperating Agency:

Bureau of Land Management



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## **Acknowledgement**

The U.S. Army and Bureau of Land Management appreciate everyone who participated in the scoping process for this project. Substantive comments are being used to inform the analysis in the Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS). The next opportunity for public input will be when the Draft LEIS is published (anticipated in 2024).

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## List of Abbreviations

Army	United States Army
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FUDS	Formerly Used Defense Site
GPS	Global Positioning System
INRMP	Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan
LEIS	Legislative Environmental Impact Statement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
NOI	Notice of Intent
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
OHV	Off-highway Vehicle
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
YPG	United States Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Army (Army) has initiated the development of a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to analyze the environmental impacts of the requested withdrawal and reservation for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public lands, currently managed by U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the LEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on September 9, 2022. Under the 1958 Engle Act (43 U.S.C. 155-158), only Congress can establish a withdrawal for defense purposes of this many acres. If enacted, this requested action, referred to as the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal, would add to the existing 829,565 acres withdrawn previously for the U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), and would extend the YPG boundary to U.S. Highway 95 (Figure 1).

The Army requires this additional land as a safety buffer for testing of advanced air delivery technologies and aviation systems, as well as more complex air delivery and tactical scenarios, on existing drop zones on YPG. In particular, global positioning system (GPS)-guided parachute systems are requiring larger surface safety zones than are currently available at YPG. The additional land space would allow for higher altitude parachute release and provide an additional buffer area in case of release point errors and system failures; this would serve to meet test and training requirements and improve public safety.

The Army, on behalf of YPG, has submitted a land withdrawal application to the BLM and they are processing this request. The BLM published a Notice of Withdrawal Application in the *Federal Register* on April 4, 2022 to notify the public of the action. The Army published an NOI to prepare an LEIS in the *Federal Register* on September 9, 2022. Publication of the NOI began the scoping process for the LEIS. The Army conducted scoping to:

1. Provide opportunities for public and agency involvement,
2. Identify issues of interest or concern to frame the LEIS, and
3. Provide an informed decision-making process.

The BLM is a cooperating agency for preparation of the LEIS and has joined the Army in the public participation process.

This Scoping Summary Report is a synopsis of scoping notification materials and comments received for the Army LEIS process. This report also includes a summary of the notification process and information regarding the BLM withdrawal application process. The comments that were received as part of the BLM's public process are included in this report and are being considered in the development of the LEIS, where relevant. This report is not a decision-making document; rather, it is intended to serve as a guide in the development of project alternatives, and it will be included in the project's Administrative Record.

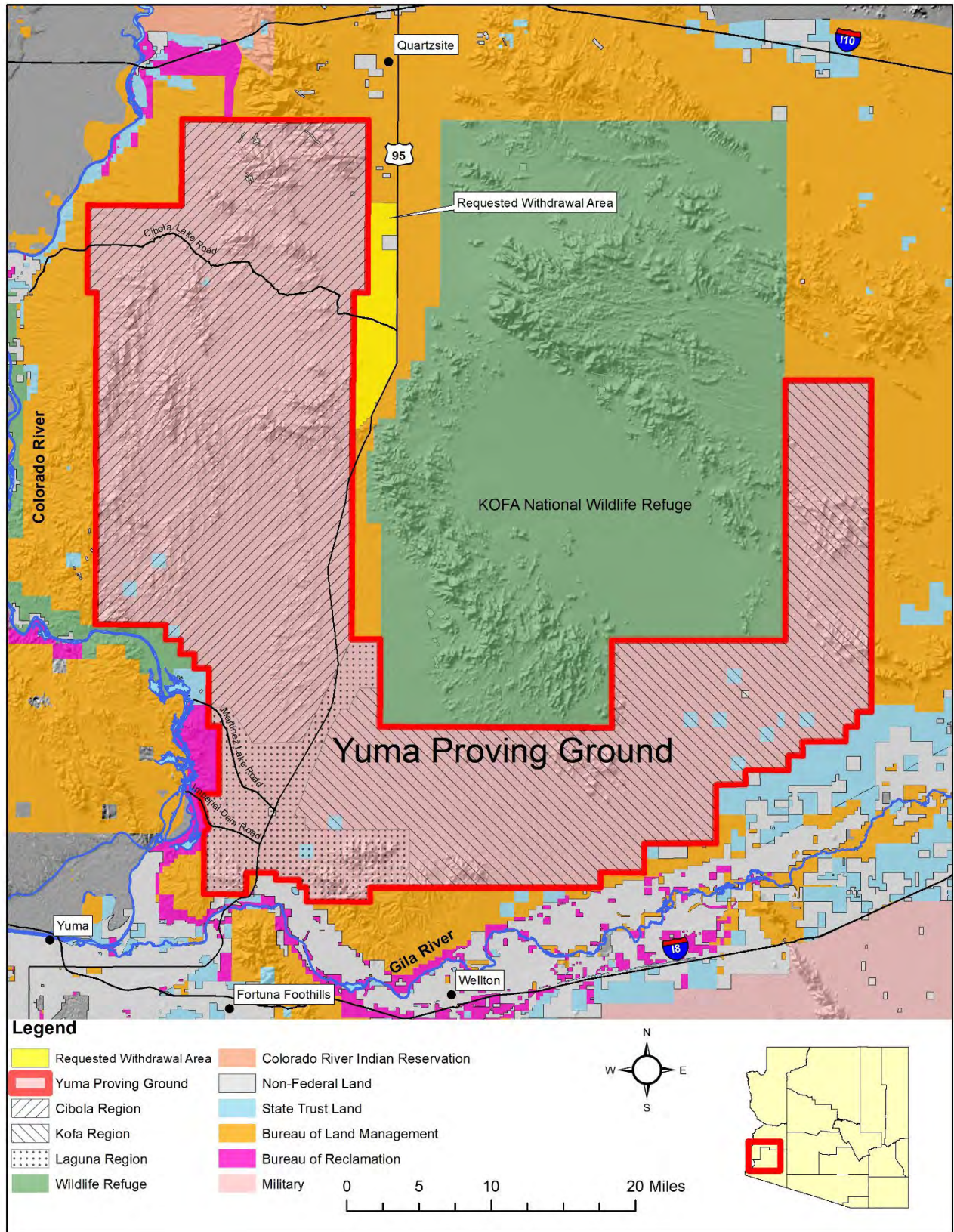


Figure 1. Location Map

## 2. U.S. ARMY NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC SCOPING

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations state that “Agencies shall use an early and open process to determine the scope of issues for analysis” and use that process for “identifying and eliminating from further study non-significant issues” (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1501.9). According to the Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR 651), “The scoping process is intended to aid in determining the scope of the analyses and significant issues related to the proposed action” and to “eliminate issues from detailed consideration which are not significant, or which have been covered by prior environmental review.” 32 CFR 651 further states that “Proper scoping identifies reasonable alternatives and the information needed for their evaluation, thereby increasing public confidence in the Army decision making process.”

The scoping process for the LEIS included a comment period and scoping meetings designed to provide background information, as well as an opportunity for members of the public to learn about the LEIS process with project representatives, and to identify issues and alternatives. During the scoping process, YPG solicited input on issues, impacts, and potential alternatives to be addressed in the LEIS, as well as the extent to which those issues and impacts will be analyzed. The Army notified the public of their intent to prepare an LEIS and the scoping period through several means, as described in Sections 2.1 through 2.5 below. (The BLM withdrawal application process is described in Section 3.)

### 2.1 U.S. Army Federal Register Notice of Intent

The Army’s NOI to prepare an LEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on September 9, 2022 (Appendix A1). This notice served as the official starting date for the scoping period. The NOI briefly discussed NEPA requirements; the proposed action and alternatives; project purpose and need; preliminary resource areas the Army intends to evaluate in the LEIS; scoping meeting dates and times; and the timeframe for the comment period. The NOI also provided a point of contact for questions and the process for submitting comments.

### 2.2 U.S. Army Scoping Newsletter

A project scoping newsletter was mailed to interested parties and agencies on September 14, 2022, and electronic copies of the newsletter were sent by email on September 20, 2022. The newsletter announced preparation of the LEIS, provided information on the project purpose and need, described the proposed action and alternatives being considered, and solicited public input in the process. The newsletter was posted to the project website and is included in Appendix A2.

### 2.3 Project Website

The Highway 95 Land Withdrawal project (<https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis>) was created to share information with the public during the development of the LEIS and land withdrawal process. The website, which went live on April 8, 2022, includes background information about the project, public notification announcements, project documents and maps, and information about project-related public meetings. It also includes an electronic form to submit comments through the scoping period and through the duration of the project. The website has been updated throughout the project with information added or revised based on the project status. Screen shots of the website are shown in Appendix A3.

### 2.4 U.S. Army Newspaper Advertisements

A paid display advertisement announcing the public scoping period was published in the *Yuma Sun* on September 18 and 19, 2022, and in the *Desert Messenger* on September 21, 2022 (Appendix A4). A



Spanish translation of the newspaper advertisement was published in the *Bajo El Sol* on September 23, 2022 (Appendix A5). The publication followed the September 9, 2022 *Federal Register* NOI.

## 2.5 U.S. Army Virtual Public Meetings

The Army held two online virtual public meetings to provide information and solicit public comments on the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal NOI to prepare an LEIS. The virtual public meetings were announced to the public through the September 9, 2022 *Federal Register* Notice (Appendix A1), a scoping newsletter (Appendix A2) sent to contacts on the project mailing list, and paid newspaper advertisements (Appendices A4 and A5). Information about the virtual public meetings was also posted on the project website.

The two virtual meetings were held Wednesday, October 19, 2022 (3:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time) and Thursday, October 20, 2022 (5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time). The meetings were held on the Teams platform and included a presentation followed by a question-and-answer period. Panelists included project team members from YPG and BLM. The virtual presentation developed for the public scoping meetings was posted to the project website and is included in Appendix A6. A similar presentation was used for the BLM virtual public meetings (see Section 3.3). Transcription was provided by a human transcriber during each virtual meeting.

Three members of the public attended the October 19 meeting, and two members of the public attended the October 20 meeting. Six comments were received on the LEIS process: one from the general public, three from agencies, and two from organizations. A summary of the comments is included in Section 6.

## 3. BLM LAND WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

The Army's proposal is a request for the withdrawal and reservation for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public land currently managed by the BLM. All federal land withdrawal applications, including those for national defense purposes and those requiring congressional review, must be submitted to the BLM for review and processing. The Army submitted a land withdrawal application for the requested withdrawal area to the BLM, who will incorporate the application, the LEIS and all other necessary materials into the withdrawal case file. Upon completion of BLM's review and processing of the application, BLM will then prepare preliminary findings and recommendations, along with draft legislation prepared in cooperation with the Army. Upon completion of these tasks, BLM will then submit the case file, the preliminary findings and recommendations, and the draft legislative proposal to the Secretary of the Interior. After review and consultation with the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Interior will submit the case file, the findings and recommendations and the draft legislative proposal to Congress for its review and potential enactment.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 35) prescribes the procedures for processing land withdrawal applications. Requirements for notifying the public about the proposed withdrawal application and soliciting public comment as part of its application review process are provided in 43 CFR 2310. Some of the comments that were submitted to BLM relate to the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS scoping process. The comments received on the BLM land withdrawal application for the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal are incorporated into this Scoping Summary Report.

### 3.1 BLM Federal Register Notice

The BLM is processing the Army's requested withdrawal in a process that is concurrent with the Army's NEPA process. The BLM's *Notice of Withdrawal Application* and *Notice of Public Meetings for the Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona*, which were published in the Federal Register on April 4, 2022, included notification of virtual public meetings. A copy of the Department of the Interior Federal Register Notice was posted on the project website and is included in Appendix B1.

## 3.2 BLM Newspaper Advertisements and Media Releases

The BLM published paid newspaper display advertisements in area newspapers to notify the public of the land withdrawal application and the two virtual public meetings. The paid display advertisement was published in the *Yuma Sun* on April 9, 2022, and in the *Desert Messenger* on April 20, 2022 (Appendix B2). A Spanish translation of the newspaper advertisement was published in the *Bajo El Sol* on April 15, 2022 (Appendix B3). The BLM also developed a media release that was issued to media outlets, sent to the Arizona Congressional delegation, and posted to BLM.gov (Appendix B4).

## 3.3 BLM Virtual Public Meetings

The BLM held two online virtual public meetings to provide information and solicit public comments on the Highway 95 Land Withdrawal application. The virtual public meetings were announced to the public through the BLM's April 4, 2022, *Federal Register* Notice (Appendix B1), paid newspaper advertisements (Appendices B2 and B3), and a BLM media release (Appendix B4). Information about the BLM virtual public meetings was posted on the project public meetings webpage. The BLM sent reminder emails to a few contacts before both the June and October meetings (Appendix B4).

The two virtual meetings were held on Teams on June 7, 2022 (3:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time) and on June 8, 2022 (5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time). The meetings included a presentation that was similar to the one presented during the Army meetings (see Appendix A6). The presentation was also posted to the project website. Panelists included project team members from the BLM and YPG. Transcription was provided by a human transcriber during each virtual meeting.

One member of the public attended the June 7 meeting, and two members of the public attended the June 8 meeting. Two comments were received on the BLM process: one from an organization and one from the general public. A summary of the comments received is presented in Section 6.

## 4. TRIBAL COORDINATION

On April 7, 2022, letters were sent notifying the Tribes listed below of the public meetings (Appendix C1):

- Ak-Chin Indian Community,
- Chemhuevi Indian Tribe,
- Cocopah Indian Tribe,
- Colorado River Indian Tribe,
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation,
- Fort Mojave Indian Tribe,
- Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe,
- Gila River Indian Community,
- Hopi Tribe,
- Pohono O'odham Nation,
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Tribe,
- San Carlos Apache Tribe,

- Tohono O'odham Nation,
- Yavapai-Apache Nation, and
- Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe.

In response to the communication, the project team received responses from the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe (Appendix C2).

The Army invited 14 tribes to the Annual Tribal Consultation Meeting at YPG in May 2022. The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe and the Gila River Indian Community attended the meeting held on May 4, 2022. Information about the withdrawal was sent to all invitees as well as being provided to those who attended the meeting.

## **5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

As described previously, YPG and the BLM invited public comments during the BLM Notice of Withdrawal Application comment period (April 4, 2022 through July 5, 2022) and the LEIS public comment period (September 9, 2022 through December 8, 2022) through a variety of notification materials and comment methods. Written comments from the LEIS process were accepted by mail, email, and via the project website. Comments received are included in Appendix D1. Written comments on the BLM land withdrawal process were accepted by mail, fax, or email. Public comments sent to the BLM during the agency's comment period are included in Appendix D2.

## **6. SUMMARY OF NEPA SCOPING COMMENTS AND COMMENTS ON THE BLM LAND WITHDRAWAL ACTION**

The Army received LEIS scoping comments from one member of the general public, three agencies, and two organizations, while the BLM received comments from one individual and one organization. Collectively, six pieces of correspondence were received.

Copies of the written comments for the LEIS are included in Appendix D1, and copies of the written comments for the BLM process are included in Appendix D2. Some comments submitted to BLM also pertain to the NEPA process and are being considered in development of the LEIS.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the comments received during the LEIS scoping period by topic, from most frequently to least frequently mentioned.

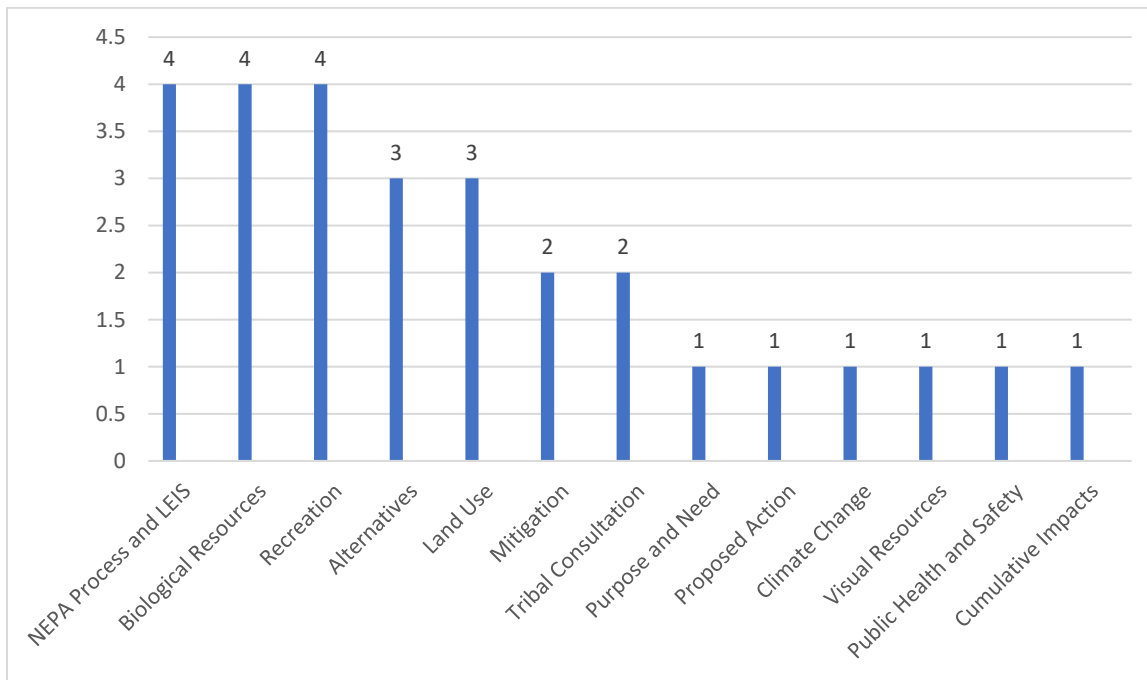


Figure 2. Comments Received by Topic.

Summaries of these comments are provided in the following sections, which are organized by the topics presented in Figure 2.

## 6.1 NEPA Process and Development of the LEIS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended the Army disclose potential additional training that could occur in the future that would be enabled by the withdrawal.

The Desert Tortoise Council stated that because the land withdrawal is connected to the Army’s need for testing and training identified in the NOI, they believe the land withdrawal and use of the lands are connected actions and that “But for the land withdrawal, there would be no change in land use.” They argued that the Army will analyze the impacts of the withdrawal and then later analyze impacts of the proposed uses. They ask for any additional documents to be provided to allow for input. They requested that the Army prepare a single LEIS on the land withdrawal and land use that describes and analyzes the impacts to the environment.

The Desert Tortoise Council stated the Army is not being transparent about the land withdrawal by separating the analysis of the land withdrawal, which is needed for expanded testing, training, and public safety, from the proposed uses of the withdrawn lands.

The Desert Tortoise Council requested the Army produce one LEIS that includes an analysis of the impacts of the land withdrawal, the impacts that will occur on the withdrawn lands, and mitigation that will be implemented, especially for the Sonoran desert tortoise.

## 6.2 Purpose and Need

One commenter stated that the purpose and need should include both military and environmental protection objectives, which should drive a reasonable range of alternatives.

### 6.3 Proposed Action

The EPA recommended that the exclusion of fencing be specifically identified in the project description to ensure wildlife movement corridors remain unhindered.

### 6.4 Alternatives

The EPA suggested consideration of alternatives with distinct or definite time periods for the withdrawal, or discussion of why this is not being considered.

The Desert Tortoise Council recommended that the Army analyze the following alternatives (or that they be considered in the mitigation section of the LEIS):

- Exclusion of the withdrawn land from compliance with the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act.
- Management responsibility of biological resources be given to the Army, with the following conditions:
  - Effective implementation of the Sikes Act at YPG to “provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources on military installations;” an updated YPG Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP), especially with respect to management/restoration of the tortoise population and habitat, monitoring, and adaptive management to enhance the Sonoran desert tortoise population/habitat at YPG.
  - Establishment of a refuge overlay on the withdrawn lands for future U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) management, when the military withdrawal is no longer needed.

### 6.5 Mitigation

The Desert Tortoise Council recommended implementing the following actions to ensure that the Army’s actions do not contribute to the listing of the Sonoran desert tortoise in the future, along with monitoring their effectiveness and promptly implementing adaptive management when implemented management actions are not fully effective:

- Update the INRMP prior to implementing any change to the current management of the withdrawn lands. These updates should include funded management actions to conserve the Sonoran desert tortoise as well as other special status species. Updating the INRMP should be a public and transparent process under NEPA.
- The YPG Commander should be a signatory to the Candidate Conservation Agreement for the Sonoran desert tortoise, after the Agreement is revised to reflect the recent devastating loss/degradation of tortoise habitat and tortoises from wildfires and climate change.
- If the Army has no plans to relinquish the proposed withdrawal of the 22,000 acres in the foreseeable future, it should modify its withdrawal request to add lands to the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) that includes a preponderance of tortoise habitat, and place a conservation easement or similar designation/protection on these mitigation lands.

The EPA suggested a possible mitigation of loss of public land by providing further protections of existing lands that are of value to the American people on YPG and/or BLM land, and recommended this concept be included in the Draft LEIS (including a discussion of the intangible value of public lands).

## **6.6 Resource Concerns**

A number of the agency and public scoping comments addressed concerns about impacts to resources. A summary of resource-specific concerns is described in the following subsections.

### **6.6.1 Biological Resources**

Several comments were focused on native wildlife, specifically bighorn sheep, Sonoran pronghorn, and the Sonoran desert tortoise.

The EPA suggested that the Draft LEIS discuss whether the Proposed Action could impact the Kofa NWR and stated they should indicate whether future military actions on withdrawn land could result in new impacts to desert bighorn sheep or other wildlife.

The Southwest Conservation Advocate Center for Biological Diversity recommended that the Army consult with the USFWS concerning potentially affected threatened and endangered species, conduct adequate environmental studies that include public participation and involvement, maintain and increase current protection for lands and wildlife within the 22,000 acres, and create and maintain wildlife crossings, where appropriate.

The Desert Tortoise Council expressed concern for the potential impacts on the Sonoran desert tortoise and its habitat from installation of fencing and on-the-ground Army activities. They stated all impacts should be included in the LEIS.

One individual asked if removing other uses from the land (i.e., grazing and off-highway vehicle [OHV] use) would help the Sonoran desert tortoise.

### **6.6.2 Climate Change**

One individual recommended the NEPA analysis address both beneficial and adverse effects of the withdrawal on climate change, specifically regarding impacts related to cattle grazing, OHV use, and changing fuel loads from invasive plants resulting in increased fires in the area.

### **6.6.3 Land Use**

The Yuma County Department of Development Services/Planning & Zoning Division asked about the effect and/or development limitations to privately owned parcels that would be surrounded by the withdrawal area.

The EPA requested a discussion of how the land withdrawal could affect future development in the utility corridor located within the proposed withdrawal area, particularly renewable energy.

The Southwest Conservation Advocate Center for Biological Diversity recommended that the withdrawal area be closed to all cattle grazing, mining, and OHV traffic.

### **6.6.4 Recreation**

Multiple comments discussed the potential loss of recreation opportunities. The EPA requested an analysis on possible road closures and trail usage in the Kofa NWR.

The Desert Tortoise Council suggested that impacts to recreation from fencing be analyzed.

One individual representing the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation expressed support for the proposed withdrawal with the understanding that the area would be managed similarly to other hunting

areas on YPG. He also encouraged the exploration of a land exchange or relaxation of existing requirements for hunters to obtain clearance to enter the withdrawn area.

#### **6.6.5 Visual Resources**

The EPA requested that the Army discuss the impacts of signage or facilities that might be constructed, as well as how they would ensure the visual character of Highway 95 is protected or enhanced.

#### **6.6.6 Tribal Consultation**

Two commenters expressed that potentially affected tribes should be consulted. The EPA recommended that the tribes be consulted early, and a summary of the early tribal consultation be included in the LEIS identifying the main concerns expressed by tribes, along with potential ways the concerns could be addressed.

#### **6.6.7 Public Health and Safety**

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality recommended that, because the withdrawal area lies within the Former Laguna Maneuver Area Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS - J09AZ043910) and risk remains for munitions and explosives of concern, visitors to the site during the land management evaluation activities be made aware of the potential for explosive hazards.

#### **6.6.8 Cumulative Impacts**

The Desert Tortoise Council requested that the Army conduct an analysis of all direct, indirect, interactive, synergistic, and cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of the land withdrawal and resulting land uses in the withdrawal area. They requested all eight principles, according to the CEQ's "Considering Cumulative Effects under the National Environmental Policy Act" (CEQ 1997), be included in the analysis, specifically citing #6, #7, and #8.

## 7. REFERENCES

- 32 CFR 651. *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 32, “National Defense,” Part 651, “Environmental Analysis of Army Actions.”
- 40 CFR 1501. *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 40, “Protection of the Environment,” Part 1501, “NEPA and Agency Planning.”
- 43 U.S.C. 155-158. *United States Code*, Title 43, “Public Lands” Parts 155-158, “Withdrawal, reservation, or restriction of public lands for defense purposes”, often referred to as the “1958 Engle Act”
- 43 CFR 2310. *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 43, “Public Lands: Interior,” Part 2310, “Withdrawals, General: Procedure.”
- 43 U.S.C. 35. *United States Code*, Title 43, “Public Lands,” Chapter 35, “Federal Land Policy and Management.”
- CEQ. 1997. *Considering Cumulative Effects under the National Environmental Policy Act*. Council on Environmental Quality. [https://ceq.doe.gov/publications/cumulative\\_effects.html](https://ceq.doe.gov/publications/cumulative_effects.html).



## **APPENDIX A**

### **U.S. ARMY SCOPING NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION MATERIALS**

- A1 Federal Register Notice, September 9, 2022
- A2 Public Scoping Newsletter
- A3 Project Website Home Page Screenshots
- A4 English Newspaper Advertisement and Publication Documentation
- A5 Spanish Newspaper Advertisement and Publication Documentation
- A6 Virtual Scoping Meeting Presentation Materials

## **Appendix A1. U.S. Army Federal Register Notice**



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standards by purchasing them from ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, P.O. Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959; phone: 610-832-9585; [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org). Alternatively, interested parties can schedule an appointment to inspect copies of the standards at CPSC's Office of the Secretary, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, 4330 East-West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814, telephone: 301-504-7479; email: [cpsc-os@cpsc.gov](mailto:cpsc-os@cpsc.gov).

Comments must be received by September 23, 2022. Because of the short statutory time frame Congress established for the Commission to consider revised voluntary standards under section 104(b)(4) of the CPSIA, CPSC will not consider comments received after this date.

**Alberta E. Mills,**  
Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission.

[FR Doc. 2022-19468 Filed 9-8-22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5355-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Department of the Army

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare Legislative Environmental Impact Statement Regarding Proposed Public Land Withdrawal In Vicinity of Arizona State Route 95, Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona

**AGENCY:** Department of the Army, DoD.  
**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Army (Army) intends to prepare a legislative environmental impact statement (LEIS) regarding the withdrawal and reservation for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public land now managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This withdrawal and reservation would add to the existing withdrawal and reservation for the Army's Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), Arizona. It would improve public safety and meet testing and training requirements for advances in Global Positioning System (GPS)-guided parachute technologies. The additional land would allow for higher-altitude parachute releases and would provide an additional buffer in case of release-point errors and system failures. The proposed withdrawal area, which would extend to Arizona State Route (SR) 95, would establish SR 95 as a distinct physical landmark for the YPG boundary. This notice announces the beginning of the public comment process, including public scoping

meetings. When the Army submits its land withdrawal application, BLM will file a separate Notice of Application for Withdrawal in the *Federal Register*. The LEIS will analyze potential impacts of the Army's use of the land. The LEIS will be transmitted to Congress to support legislative decision-making regarding the Army's request.

**DATES:** To be considered during the LEIS process, comments must be received by December 8, 2022.

**ADDRESSES:** Please mail written comments to: Mr. Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison—Yuma Proving Ground, 301 C St., Bldg. 307, Yuma, AZ 85365. Please email written comments to: [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Mr. Daniel Steward, YPG Environmental Sciences Division, by telephone at (928) 328-2125 or by email at [daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil](mailto:daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Army intends to prepare an LEIS to analyze potential impacts from a possible legislative withdrawal for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public land managed by BLM. The proposed action involves a withdrawal and reservation of 21,200 acres of public land from all forms of appropriation (such as mining claims) and 800 acres of federal surface estate (meaning the subsurface is not included). The land is needed to improve public safety and meet testing and training requirements for advances in parachute technologies. If enacted into law, the withdrawal would add to—and be adjacent to—the 829,565 acres withdrawn on July 1, 1952, under Public Land Order 848, as amended, for use by the Army in connection with Yuma Test Station (currently known as YPG). The land withdrawal the Army is currently seeking would be for an indefinite period—*i.e.*, until there is no longer a military need for the land.

YPG is located in the southwestern corner of Arizona, near the California-Arizona border. It is bounded by the Colorado River to the west and the Gila River to the south. The installation lies approximately 23 miles northeast of the city of Yuma, Arizona. A portion is situated in La Paz County and a portion is situated in Yuma County. Both counties are in Arizona. The proposed withdrawal involves land in each county. YPG occupies about 1,300 square miles and extends approximately 60 miles north to south and 50 miles east to west. YPG's mission is to plan, conduct, assess, analyze, report, and support developmental, production, and

operational tests on: medium- and long-range artillery; aircraft target acquisition equipment and armament; armored tracked and wheeled vehicles; a variety of munitions; and parachute systems for personnel and supplies. YPG also provides training support to the Army, DoD, other federal agencies, and international and commercial customers.

The purpose of the proposed land withdrawal is to provide approximately 22,000 acres of additional area for testing and training at YPG. The Army requires the additional land as a safety buffer for testing advanced air delivery technologies and aviation systems. The additional land will also allow the Army to execute more complex air delivery and tactical scenarios. Higher altitudes and greater offset distances are required to test parachute systems' full capabilities. Parachute systems need larger buffer areas (*i.e.*, surface safety zones) than are currently available. The surface safety zone is an area in space and on the ground that provides an additional buffer in case of error or failure. Surface safety zones protect people from being injured by material dropping from the sky during air delivery testing and training.

Currently, because of land and airspace limitations, systems are not tested to their full capability for altitude and precision. Higher-elevation and GPS-guided air delivery methods are being developed to provide better support to soldiers and other personnel in the field. GPS-guided delivery is designed to ensure payloads arrive at the intended location while keeping aircrews and other personnel out of harm's way. A payload is a palletized package of various weights and items, such as a vehicle, equipment, and/or supplies. Guided delivery systems undergoing development require safety buffers to contain potential testing errors and failures. The requested withdrawal area would provide an additional safety buffer to protect the public. Without the proposed withdrawal, drops could land outside the current YPG boundary. This could result in injury or death to members of the public. The land withdrawal would restrict the public from accessing hazardous areas, thus reducing the potential for injuries and death. The withdrawn land may also be used for other training and testing activities that are not known at this time. Such activities would be subject to additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.

Currently, the boundary between YPG and BLM land lacks a contiguous physical landmark demarcating the two

areas, which has led to unintentional public intrusions onto YPG. The requested withdrawal area extends to SR 95. This would establish the highway as a distinct physical landmark for the YPG boundary, thereby improving public safety.

In addition to the proposed action, the LEIS will analyze a range of alternatives, including a no-action alternative under which there would be no additional land withdrawal and YPG would not expand its capability. While the proposed action entails a withdrawal of land for an indefinite period, action alternatives could include the withdrawal and reservation of land for a shorter duration (e.g., 25 years).

The Army will analyze potential environmental impacts resulting from the withdrawal of land from BLM oversight and from expanding military capability within the withdrawn area. The Army will cover possible impacts to biological and cultural resources in a separate NEPA analysis before training and testing begin.

The withdrawal could impact recreational activities that occasionally take place on the BLM-managed land proposed for withdrawal. Recreational use of the area is currently allowed, but if Congress withdraws and reserves this land for YPG, public use would be subject to the terms of the relevant legislation and applicable Army regulations, procedures, and management plans. Thus, public use would likely be restricted in some manner.

The LEIS will also identify mitigation measures that would reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts resulting from the transfer of this land to the Army's administrative control. The environmental analysis will include coordination with area Native American Tribes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other federal, state, and local agencies. The Army is not aware of any federal or state permits or other approvals that would be required in conjunction with a legislative withdrawal or reservation. The Army is requesting the withdrawal of approximately 22,000 acres from all types of appropriation (such as mining claims) under federal public land laws. This administrative activity does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties within the meaning of 36 CFR part 800.3(a)(1), and is not subject to further review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Army is the lead agency for the LEIS and BLM is a cooperating agency. As a cooperating agency, BLM will join the Army in the public comment

process. Both agencies will thereby fulfill their requirements to inform the public about the proposed action. Federal, state, and local agencies, Native American Tribes, private organizations, and the public are invited to participate in the public comment process for the LEIS by participating in a public scoping meeting(s) and/or by submitting written comments. The Army invites potential alternatives, information, and analyses relevant to the proposed action. To be considered, written comments must be sent no later than December 8, 2022. Comments may be mailed to Mr. Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison—Yuma Proving Ground, 301 C St., Bldg. 307, Yuma, AZ 85365, or emailed to [usarmy.ypg.incom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.incom.mbx.nepa@army.mil).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for social distancing and avoiding large public gatherings, the Army will not hold in-person public scoping meetings. YPG will instead host two online/telephonic public scoping meetings 30 days after publication of this notice. Specific details regarding the public scoping meetings will be announced through local media and on the YPG LEIS website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>. Public scoping materials will also be posted to the YPG LEIS website.

For those who do not have ready access to a computer or to the internet, hard copies of public scoping materials are available upon request. Any mailed requests for public scoping materials must be postmarked no later than September 29, 2022.

The public will also be invited to review and comment on the Draft LEIS when it is released. Public comments will be considered before proposed legislation is presented to Congress and before any decision is made to implement the proposed action. Actual and estimated milestone dates are as follows: BLM published a Notice of Application for Withdrawal in the *Federal Register* on April 4, 2022; public meetings were held on June 7 and 8, 2022; BLM filed a Notice of Proposed Withdrawal in the *Federal Register* on June 30, 2022. LEIS public scoping meetings are to be held 30 days after publication of this Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register*; a 90-day public comment period regarding the Draft LEIS is expected to start in July 2023;

and the Final LEIS is expected to be available in February 2024.

**James W. Satterwhite Jr.,**  
Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.  
[FR Doc. 2022-19461 Filed 9-8-22; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3711-02-P

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP22-17-000]

#### Rio Grande LNG, LLC; Notice of Scoping Period Requesting Comments on Environmental Issues for the Proposed Carbon Capture and Sequestration System Amendment, and Notice of Public Scoping Sessions

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental document that will discuss the environmental impacts of the Carbon Capture and Sequestration System Amendment (CCS System Amendment) involving construction and operation of facilities by Rio Grande LNG, LLC (Rio Grande) in Cameron County, Texas. Rio Grande's CCS System Amendment was filed under section 3 of the Natural Gas Act as an amendment to its November 22, 2019 Authorization order for the Rio Grande LNG Terminal.<sup>1</sup> The Commission will use this environmental document in its decision-making process to determine whether the CCS System Amendment is consistent with the public interest.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies regarding the project amendment. As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, the Commission takes into account concerns the public may have about proposals and the environmental impacts that could result from its action whenever it considers the issuance of an authorization under Section 3 of the Natural Gas Act. This gathering of public input is referred to as "scoping." The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the environmental document on the important environmental issues. Additional information about the Commission's NEPA process is described below in the NEPA Process and Environmental Document section of this notice.

<sup>1</sup>Rio Grande LNG, LLC, 169 FERC ¶ 61,131 (2019), order on reh'g, 170 FERC ¶ 61,046 (2020).

## **Appendix A2. U.S. Army Public Scoping Newsletter**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, YUMA  
301 C STREET  
YUMA AZ 85365-9498

September 14, 2022

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

The U. S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (USAGYPG) has initiated the development of a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze the environmental impacts of the withdrawal and reservation for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A Notice of Intent to prepare the LEIS was published in the Federal Register on September 9, 2022. This withdrawal would add to the existing withdrawal for Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) and would extend the boundary to Arizona Highway 95, as shown on the enclosed map.

The Army requires this additional land as a safety buffer for testing of advanced air delivery technologies and aviation systems, as well as more complex air delivery and tactical scenarios on existing drop zones on YPG. In particular, GPS-guided parachute systems are requiring larger Surface Safety Zones than are currently available at YPG. The additional land space would allow for higher altitude parachute release and provide an additional buffer area in case of release point errors and system failures, which would meet test and training requirements and improve public safety.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on behalf of YPG, have submitted a land withdrawal application to the BLM and they are processing this request. The BLM published a Notice of Withdrawal Application April 4, 2022 and will be a cooperating agency for preparation of the LEIS. BLM will join the Army in the public participation process to fulfill requirements for both agencies to inform the public about the proposed action. Publication of the BLM notice initiated a 90-day public comment period that ended July 5, 2022.

Written comments identifying potential environmental impacts to be analyzed in the LEIS will be welcomed and accepted through December 8, 2022. The public will also be invited to review and comment on the Draft LEIS when it is released. During the 90-day comment period, there will be two public meetings scheduled for October 19 and 20, 2022. The public meeting will be hosted online and by telephone with meeting materials available on the YPG NEPA public website at <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>. Information needed to join each meeting is outlined on page two of this letter.

a. Public meeting 1: October 19, 2022, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm Mountain Standard Time (MST).

b. Public meeting 2: October 20, 2022, 5:00 pm MST

Please use the following link to join by computer:


[https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting\\_0d0a58abd5b34090b72f93c0b5a68cc2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22459a70db-7b43-4f6a-a5bf-eb8721fd5717%22%7d](https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting_0d0a58abd5b34090b72f93c0b5a68cc2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22459a70db-7b43-4f6a-a5bf-eb8721fd5717%22%7d)

You can also join by phone at: +1 571-616-7941 Conference ID: 741 886 800#

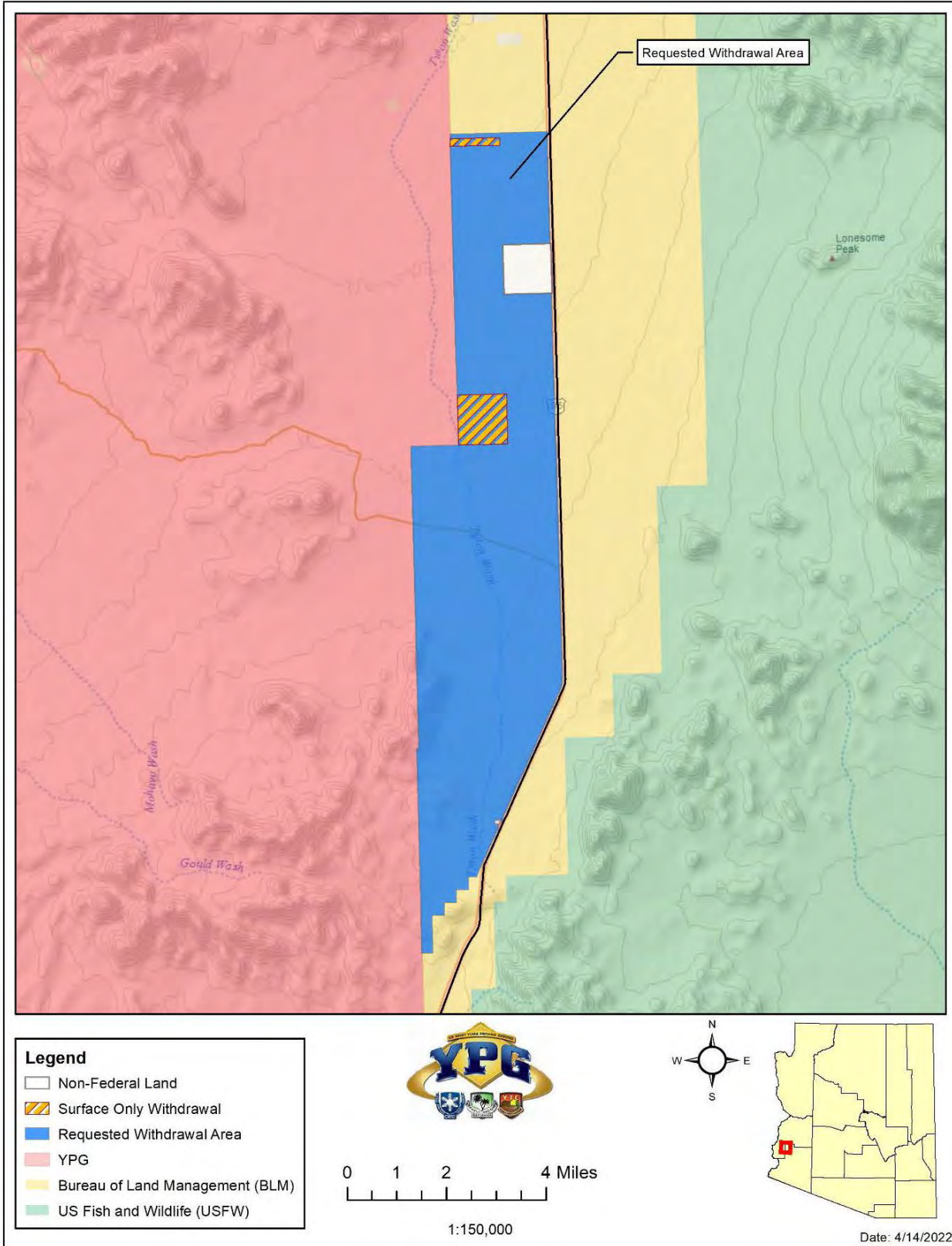
Information about the proposed withdrawal and meeting materials are available on the YPG NEPA website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>. For all, including those without computer and/or internet access, inquiries about the proposed withdrawal, requests for scoping-related materials, and comments regarding the proposal may be submitted directly to Mr. Daniel Steward via the contact information contained below or via email to [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil). To ensure the Army has sufficient time to consider public input in the preparation of the Draft LEIS, scoping comments should be submitted via email or to the address listed below, by no later than December 8, 2022.

Your input is valued, and we look forward to working with you during this process. Comments can be submitted to the USAG YPG Environmental Sciences at U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground, 301 C Street, IMYM-PWE, Yuma, AZ 85365-9498 or via email to [Daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil](mailto:Daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil). If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mr. Daniel Steward at (928) 328-2125.

Sincerely,

  
Kenneth O. Musselwhite Sr.  
Acting Garrison Manager

Enclosure





## **Appendix A3. Project Website Home Page Screenshots**

**YPG ENVIRONMENTAL**

Home | NEPA | Cultural Resources Management | Drinking Water | Hunting Program | Natural Resources

### LEIS Navigation

- » Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS
- » About
- » FAQs
- » Public Documents
- » Public Meetings
- » Contact Us

## Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS

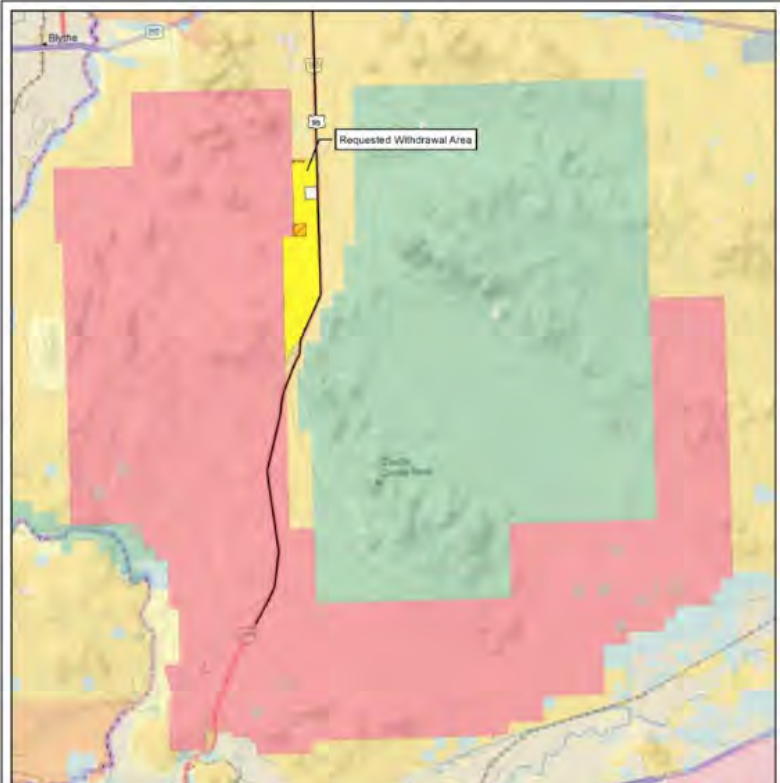
### Welcome

This website is YPG's online center for public information and involvement in the Highway 95 land withdrawal Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS). The purpose of this site is to provide information about the Army's requested withdrawal and reservation for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public land managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

### Importance of Public Participation in the LEIS

The LEIS process consists of several steps intended to encourage public input to inform the decision-making process. Information gathered during the LEIS process will help facilitate an understanding of the public's perceptions, refine the project – including potential alternatives, and inform the analysis of environmental impacts. This website provides information about the process, updates about the project, and ways in which the public can participate in the LEIS process. The Army values the public's ideas and comments about this project and encourages stakeholders to check back often for updates.

**Yuma Proving Ground Location:**



## Public Meetings

The Army and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will jointly hold two public meetings to solicit public comments on the requested land withdrawal. Federal, state, and local agencies; Tribes; private organizations; and the public are invited to join the process for the preparation of the LEIS by participating in a public meeting or submitting written comments to help identify potential environmental impacts and key issues of concern to be analyzed in the LEIS. Specifically, YPG is requesting identification of potential alternatives, information, and analyses relevant to the proposed action.

The Army and BLM will host the joint public comment meetings by virtual meeting online through Microsoft Teams and by telephone. See below for links and dial in numbers for the meetings. Dates of the meetings are as follows:

- October 19, 2022, 3:00 PM MST
- October 20, 2022, 5:00 PM MST

Si necesita asistencia o necesita un traductor de español, envíe un correo electrónico a [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army).

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – 3:00 PM MST**

Please login 5-10 minutes before the meeting begins to make sure that you do not have any connection issues and to enter your name. Please use the chat function if you have any issues.

To join through your web browser or Microsoft Teams, paste the following into your browser:

[https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/l/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting\\_0d0a58abd5b34090b72f93c0b5a68cc2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22tid%22%3a%22fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22459a70db-7b43-4f6a-a5bf-eb8721fd5717%22%7d](https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/l/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting_0d0a58abd5b34090b72f93c0b5a68cc2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22tid%22%3a%22fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22459a70db-7b43-4f6a-a5bf-eb8721fd5717%22%7d)

You may also call in to the virtual public meetings, but phone participants will not see the presentation unless you download or request it in advance. The presentation is available for [viewing and download here](#).

To Join by phone:

Toll number: +1 571-616-7941

Conference ID: 741 886 800#

## Public Documents

The following Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS documentation is available for download and review. Documentation will change as the project progresses, so please check back often.

### Public Scoping Materials

[June 7th 2022 Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS Meeting Presentation](#)

[June 8th 2022 Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS Meeting Presentation](#)

[October 19th 2022 Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS Meeting Presentation](#)

[October 20th 2022 Highway 95 Land Withdrawal LEIS Meeting Presentation](#)

### Technical Reports Supporting the Draft LEIS

[Mineral Potential Report](#)

### External Links and Documents

BLM's Notice of Withdrawal Application and Notice of Public Meetings:

[2022-07037.pdf \(govinfo.gov\)](#)

YPG's Notice of Intent To Prepare Legislative Environmental Impact Statement:

[YPG-NOI-as-published-in-FR-2022-19461.pdf](#)

Information about BLM's Highway 95 Withdrawal Land Management Evaluation

[EplanningUi \(blm.gov\)](#)

Si necesita asistencia o necesita un traductor de español, envíe un correo electrónico a [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil).

## Contact Us

Public scoping comments may be sent to the LEIS team via letter, email, or this website using the form below.

**Mail letters to:**

Highway 95 LEIS  
Daniel Steward  
YPG Environmental Sciences Division  
U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground  
301 C St. Bldg. 307  
Yuma, AZ 85365

**For more information or questions about the project, please contact:**

Daniel Steward, YPG Environmental Sciences Division

**Phone:** 928-328-2125

**Email:** [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

**Or** [BLM\\_AZ-Withdrawal\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ-Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov)

### Comment Form

Fields marked with an \* are required

Name / Nombre \*

Email / Correo Electrónico \*

Message / Mensaje \*

You have 500 characters left.

Submit

Si necesita asistencia o necesita un traductor de español, envíe un correo electrónico a [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil).

## **Appendix A4. U.S. Army English Newspaper Advertisement**

**Yuma Proving Ground  
Highway 95 Land Withdrawal  
Notice of Public Comment Period and Virtual  
Meetings**

The U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is preparing a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) to analyze the environmental impacts associated with the U.S. Department of the Army's (Army) request to withdraw and reserve for military purposes approximately 22,000 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). If the request is approved by Congress, then the requested area would be added to the existing YPG withdrawal area and would extend a portion of the YPG boundary east to Highway 95, establishing the highway as a distinct physical landmark for the YPG boundary in that area. The requested withdrawal area would provide an additional safety buffer area to support air delivery testing on existing YPG facilities.

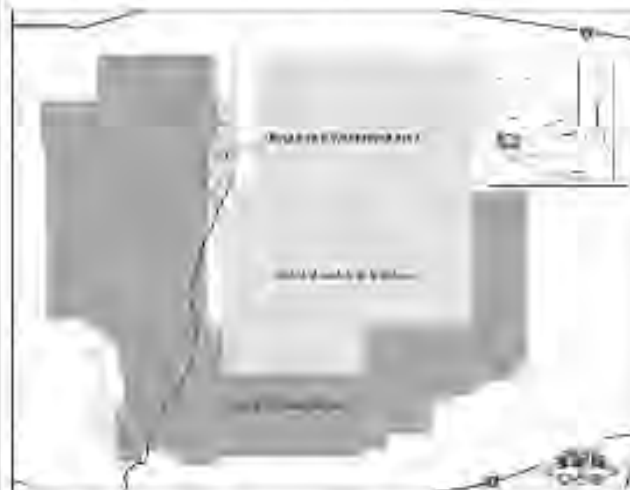
The public may submit comments on the proposal until December 8, 2022.

Email: [uaarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:uaarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

Mail: Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison YPG, 301 C St. Bldg. 307, Yuma, AZ 85385.

There will be two joint online public meetings hosted by the Army and BLM to gather input from the public. The meetings are scheduled for Wednesday October 19, 2022, at 3 p.m. and Thursday October 20, 2022, at 5 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.

Go to <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/> and click on the Public Meetings tab to access the link and phone number for the meetings. Presentation materials will be available on the website for printing for those who wish to join the meeting by phone.



Yuma Sun: September 18, 19, 2022 - 100303

Ad text : Yuma Proving Ground  
Highway 95 Land Withdrawal  
Notice of Public Comment Period and Virtual Meetings

The U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is preparing a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) to analyze the environmental impacts associated with the U.S. Department of the Army's (Army) request to withdraw and reserve for military purposes approximately 22,000 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). If the request is approved by Congress, then the requested area would be added to the existing YPG withdrawal area and would extend a portion of the YPG boundary east to Highway 95, establishing the highway as a distinct physical landmark for the YPG boundary in that area. The requested withdrawal area would provide an additional safety buffer area to support air delivery testing on existing YPG facilities.

The public may submit comments on the proposal until December 8, 2022.

Email: [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

Mail: Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison YPG, 301 C St. Bldg. 307, Yuma, AZ 85365.

There will be two joint online public meetings hosted by the Army and BLM to gather input from the public. The meetings are scheduled for Wednesday October 19, 2022, at 3 p.m. and Thursday October 20, 2022, at 5 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.

Go to <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/> and click on the Public Meetings tab to access the link and phone number for the meetings. Presentation materials will be available on the website for printing for those who wish to join the meeting by phone.

Yuma Sun: September 18, 19, 2022 - 100303



AFFP  
YPG LAND WITHDRAWAL

**Affidavit of Publication**

STATE OF AZ }                   SS  
COUNTY OF YUMA }

Lisa Reilly or David Fornof, being duly sworn, says:

That (s)he is Publisher or Director of Operations of the Yuma Sun, a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in Yuma, Yuma County, AZ; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was in the published said newspaper on the following dates:

09/18/2022 09/19/2022

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher or Director of Operations

Subscribed to and sworn to me this 19th day of September 2022.

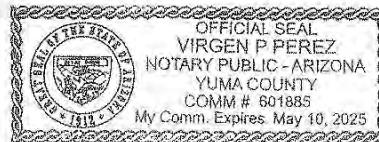


\_\_\_\_\_  
VIRGEN P PEREZ, Notary, Yuma County, AZ

My commission expires: May 10, 2025

305002 100303

NORTH WIND RESOURCE CONSULTING  
301 C ST. BLDG. 105  
YUMA AZ 85365



September 21, 2022

www.DesertMessenger.com

7

# letters to the editor

## POLL WORKERS & OBSERVERS WANTED

La Paz County needs more Democrats as poll workers and poll observers... it's safe and desperately needed.

2022 County Poll Worker Information | Arizona Secretary of State at [azsos.gov](http://azsos.gov).

### For La Paz County:

Please email the address below to state your interest in being a poll worker. Include your name, address, phone number, and party registration.

Primary Email: [elections@lapazcountyaz.org](mailto:elections@lapazcountyaz.org)  
Or Email:

[lathornbury@lapazcountyaz.org](mailto:lathornbury@lapazcountyaz.org)  
For more information call La Paz County Elections Dept. at 928-669-6149

### High School Poll Worker Information:

La Paz County can hire qualified high school students to be poll workers on Election Day.

Please email the address below to state your interest.

Email: [bbartelsmeyer@lapazcountyaz.org](mailto:bbartelsmeyer@lapazcountyaz.org) (link sends e-mail)  
For more information phone La Paz County Election Dept. at 928-669-6149.

Thank you,

Mary Darling,  
La Paz County Democrats

**DUMP THE DRUGS IN QUARTZSITE!**  
*Do you have expired or unused medications?*  
 Dispose safely at Quartzsite Police Dept.  
 Monday - Thursday, 7am-5 pm  
 Sponsored by QPD  
 Town of Quartzsite, AZ

## Yuma Proving Ground Highway 95 Land Withdrawal Notice of Public Comment Period and Virtual Meetings

The U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is preparing a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) to analyze the environmental impacts associated with the U.S. Department of the Army's (Army) request to withdraw and reserve for military purposes approximately 22,000 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). If the request is approved by Congress, then the requested area would be added to the existing YPG withdrawal area and would extend a portion of the YPG boundary east to Highway 95, establishing the highway as a distinct physical landmark for the YPG boundary in that area. The requested withdrawal area would provide an additional safety buffer area to support air delivery testing on existing YPG facilities.

The public may submit comments on the proposal until December 8, 2022.

Email: [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

Mail: Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison YPG, 301 C St. Bldg. 307, Yuma, AZ 85365.

There will be two joint online public meetings hosted by the Army and BLM to gather input from the public. The meetings are scheduled for **Wednesday October 19, 2022, at 3 p.m.** and **Thursday October 20, 2022, at 5 p.m.** Mountain Standard Time.

Go to <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/> and click on the Public Meetings tab to access the link and phone number for the meetings. Presentation materials will be available on the website for printing for those who wish to join the meeting by phone.



## **Appendix A5. U.S. Army Spanish Newspaper Advertisement**

**Yuma Proving Ground  
Autopista 95 Retiro de Tierras  
Aviso de Período de Comentarios Públicos  
y Reuniones Virtuales**

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Garrison del Ejército de los Estados Unidos está preparando una Declaración Legislativa de Impacto Ambiental (LEIS) para analizar los impactos ambientales asociados con la solicitud del Departamento del Ejército de los Estados Unidos (Army) de retirar y reservar para fines militares aproximadamente 22,000 acres de tierras públicas administradas por la Oficina de Administración de Tierras (BLM). Si el Congreso aprueba la solicitud, el área solicitada se agregaría al área de tierra retirada de YPG existente y se extendería una parte del límite de YPG hacia el este hasta la autopista 95, estableciendo la autopista como un punto de referencia para el límite de YPG en esa área. El área de retiro solicitada proporcionaría un área de amortiguamiento de seguridad adicional para respaldar las pruebas de suministro de aire en las instalaciones existentes de YPG.

El público puede presentar comentarios sobre la propuesta hasta el 08 de diciembre del 2022.

Correo electrónico: [usarmy\\_ypg\\_fmcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy_ypg_fmcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

Correo: Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison YPG, 301 C St. Bldg. 307, Yuma AZ 85365

Habrán dos reuniones públicas conjuntas en línea organizadas por el Ejército y BLM para recopilar información del público. Las reuniones están programadas para el miércoles 19 de octubre del 2022 a las 15:00 horas, y jueves 20 de octubre del 2022 a las 17:00 horas, en zona horario de la montaña.

Vaya a <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/> y haga clic en la pestaña reuniones públicas para acceder al enlace y al número de teléfono de las reuniones. Los materiales de la presentación estarán disponibles en el sitio web para imprimir para aquellos que deseen unirse a la reunión por teléfono.



Bajo El Sol: 23 de septiembre del 2022 - 100336

Ad text : Yuma Proving Ground  
Autopista 95 Retiro de Tierras  
Aviso de Período de Comentarios Públicos  
y Reuniones Virtuales

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Garrison del Ejército de los Estados Unidos está preparando una Declaración Legislativa de Impacto Ambiental (LEIS) para analizar los impactos ambientales asociados con la solicitud del Departamento del Ejército de los Estados Unidos (Army) de retirar y reservar para fines militares aproximadamente 22,000 acres de tierras públicas administradas por la Oficina de Administración de Tierras (BLM). Si el Congreso aprueba la solicitud, el área solicitada se agregaría al área de tierra retirada de YPG existente y se extendería una parte del límite de YPG hacia el este hasta la autopista 95, estableciendo la autopista como un punto de referencia para el límite de YPG en esa área. El área de retiro solicitada proporcionaría un área de amortiguamiento de seguridad adicional para respaldar las pruebas de suministro de aire en las instalaciones existentes de YPG.

El público puede presentar comentarios sobre la propuesta hasta el 08 de diciembre del 2022.

Correo electrónico: [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

Correo: Daniel Steward, Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Army Garrison YPG, 301 C St. Bldg. 307, Yuma AZ 85365

Habrán dos reuniones públicas conjuntas en línea organizadas por el Ejército y BLM para recopilar información del público. Las reuniones están programadas para el miércoles 19 de octubre del 2022 a las 15:00 horas, y jueves 20 de octubre del 2022 a las 17:00 horas, en zona horario de la montaña.

Vaya a <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/> y haga clic en la pestaña reuniones públicas para acceder al enlace y al número de teléfono de las reuniones. Los materiales de la presentación estarán disponibles en el sitio web para imprimir para aquellos que deseen unirse a la reunión por teléfono.

Bajo El Sol: 23 de septiembre del 2022 - 100336

## **Appendix A6. Virtual Scoping Meeting Presentation Materials**



**U.S. ARMY**



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

**The meeting will start at 3 p.m.**

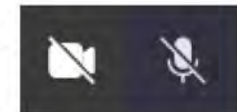
**Phone Line: 571-616-7941**

**Meeting ID: 741 886 800#**

**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).**





**U.S. ARMY**



## 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 unless we call on you.
  
- ✓ Please be respectful and courteous. Any objectionable or rude language will be grounds for removal from the meeting.
  
- ✓ Phone Line: 571-616-7941 Meeting ID: 741 886 800#
  
- ✓ Please mute yourself to reduce feedback and background noise.





**U.S. ARMY**



## Meeting Purpose

- ✓ **Purpose of today's meeting is for the Department of the Army (Army) Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to request comments and gather information.**
- ✓ **We welcome your comments and questions and will have subject matter experts available during the Q&A portion.**
- ✓ **Nothing in today's meeting constitutes a promise and/or an agreement.**



## Meeting Agenda



- ✓ **Welcome and Introductions**
- ✓ **Meeting Protocol**
- ✓ **Presentation**
- ✓ **Question and Answer**
- ✓ **Closing**





## Welcome

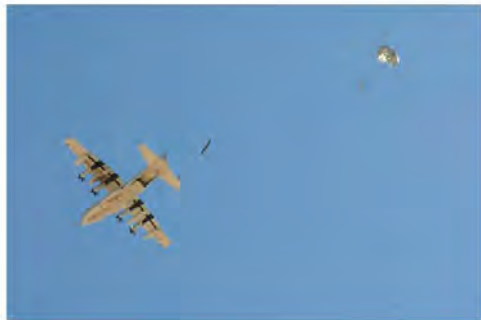


- ✓ **Welcome from Colonel Ben “Patrick” McFall,  
Yuma Proving Ground Commander**
- ✓ **Welcome from David “Rem” Hawes,  
BLM Yuma Field Office Manager**



# Yuma Proving Ground

Welcome from Colonel McFall, US Army Yuma Proving Ground

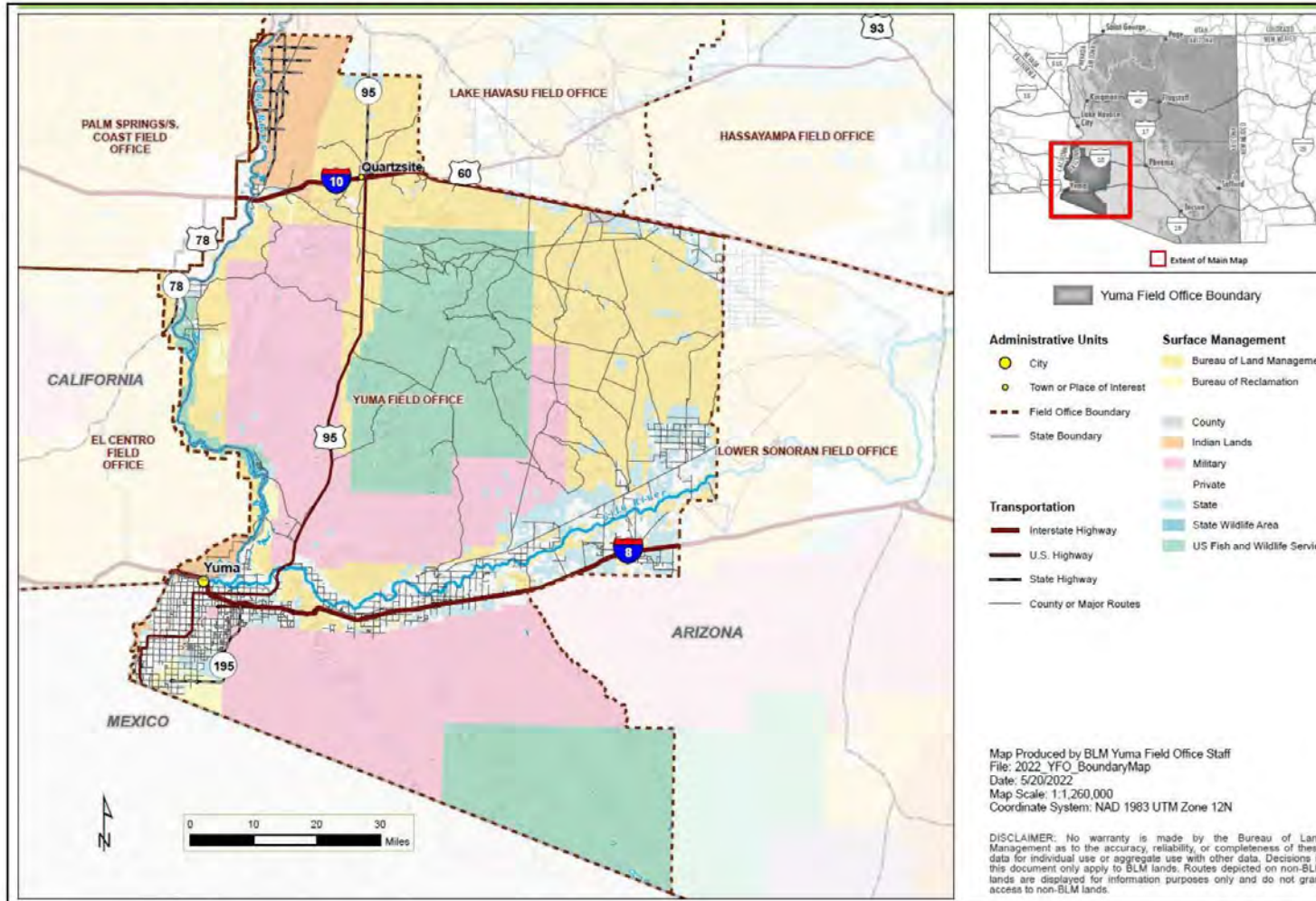




U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

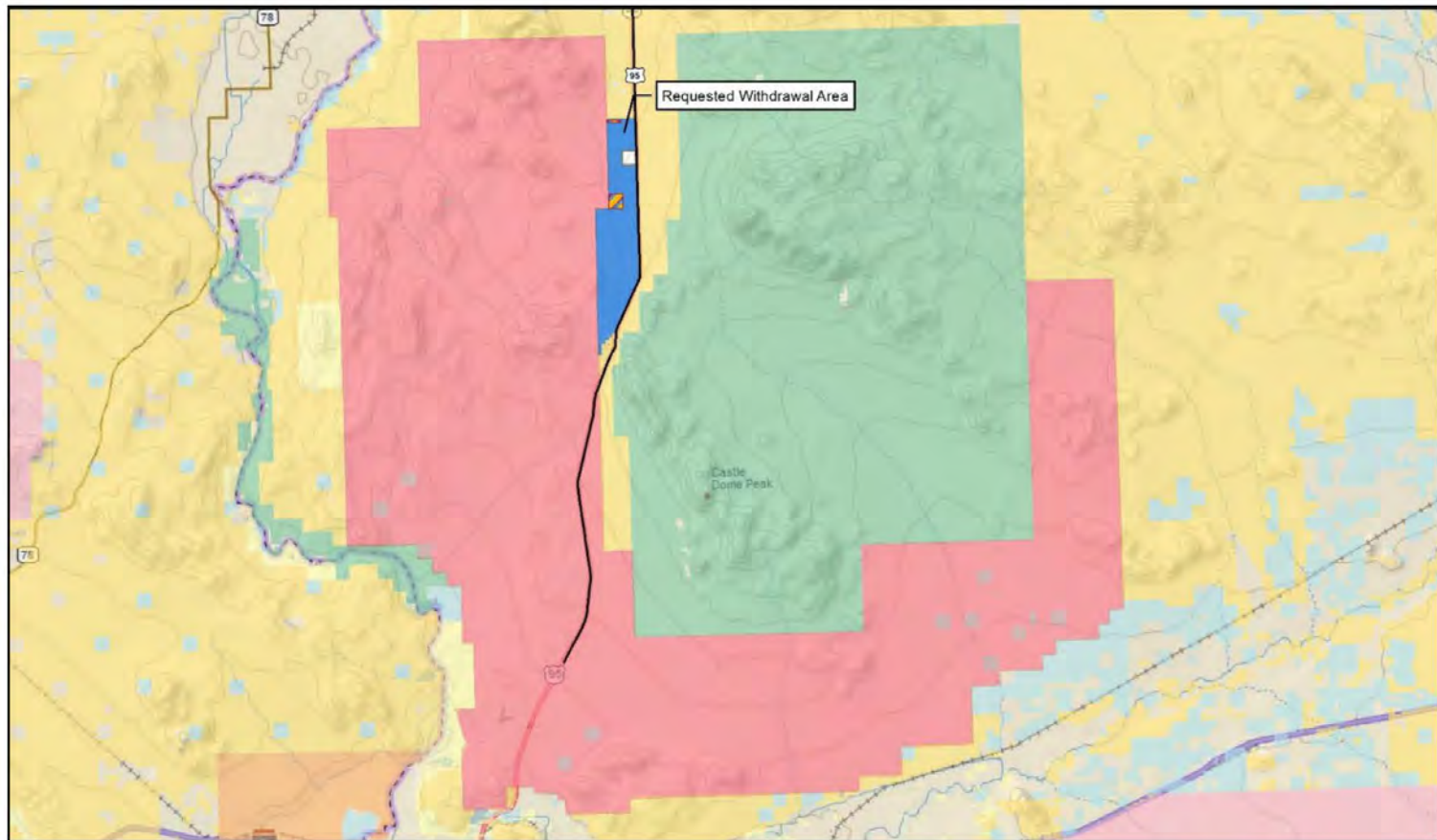
# Yuma Field Office BLM

Welcome from Rem Hawes, BLM Yuma Field Manager





# Yuma Proving Ground



### Legend

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



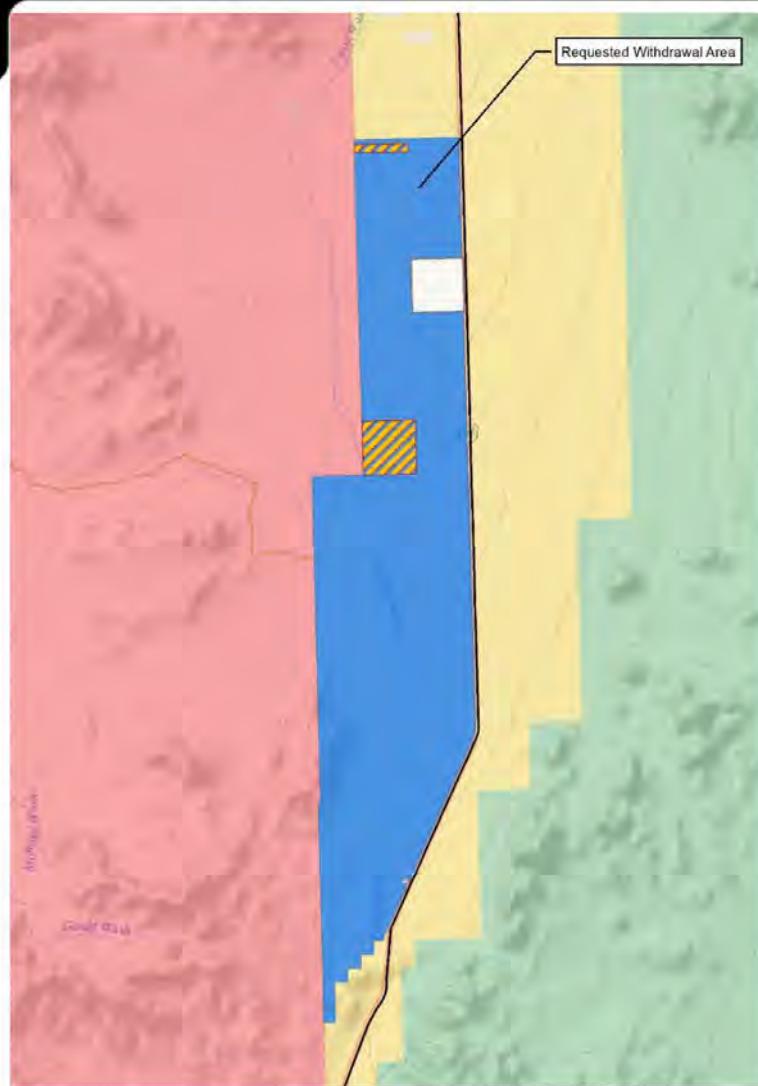
0 4.25 8.5 17 Miles

1:600,000

Date: 4/14/2023



## Yuma Proving Ground



- ✓ 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.





U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

## YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal Application

### 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.
- ✓ As part of the withdrawal request, the Army is preparing a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), and a public meeting helps in gathering information for the LEIS process.





# Yuma Proving Ground Legislative Environmental Impact Statement





## 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.**
- ✓ **This is the beginning of the process of gathering information to assist in the analysis.**
- ✓ **The LEIS will include proposed and alternative actions.**

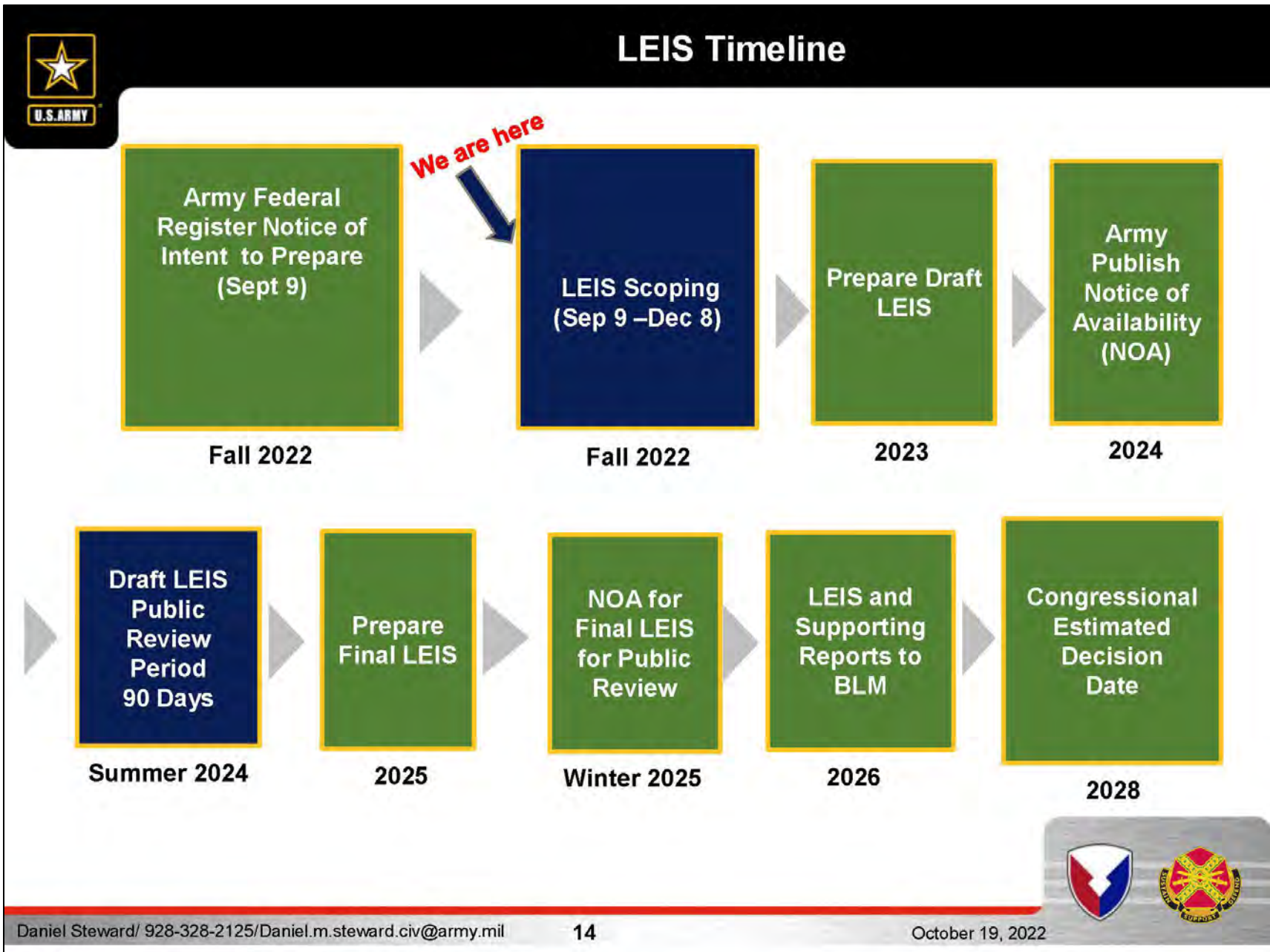




## Army Withdrawal LEIS Process

- ✓ **Army published the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.**
- ✓ **Public comment meetings.**
- ✓ **Army develops LEIS based on comments and affected environment.**
- ✓ **Draft LEIS will be available for public comment.**
- ✓ **Army will incorporate comments and prepare a Final LEIS.**
- ✓ **LEIS and application case file is presented to Congress through BLM.**







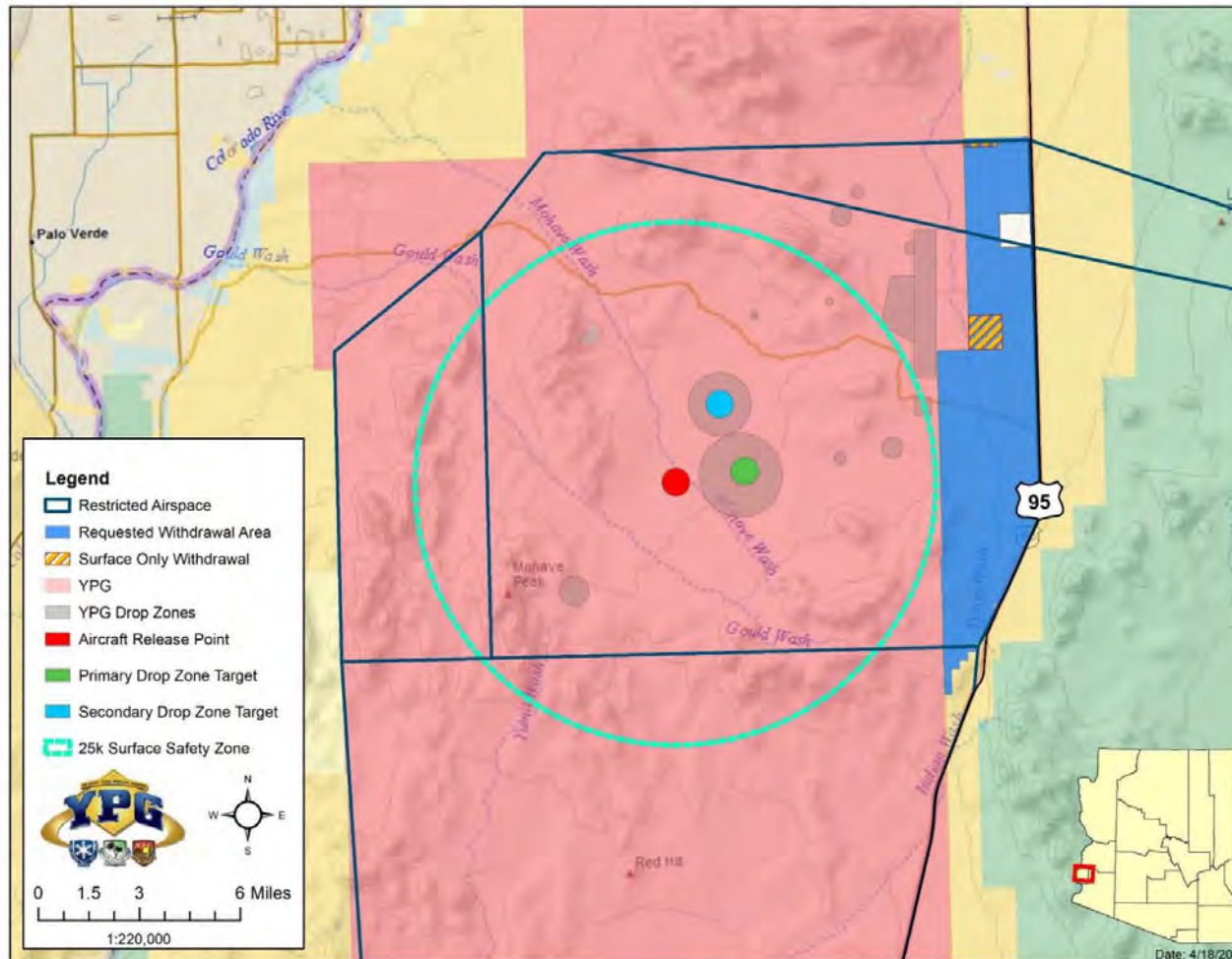
## Purpose and Need

- ✓ The withdrawal would provide an **additional safety buffer** to support air delivery testing at higher altitudes on existing Drop Zones within the existing YPG boundary.





# No Action: Current Capability



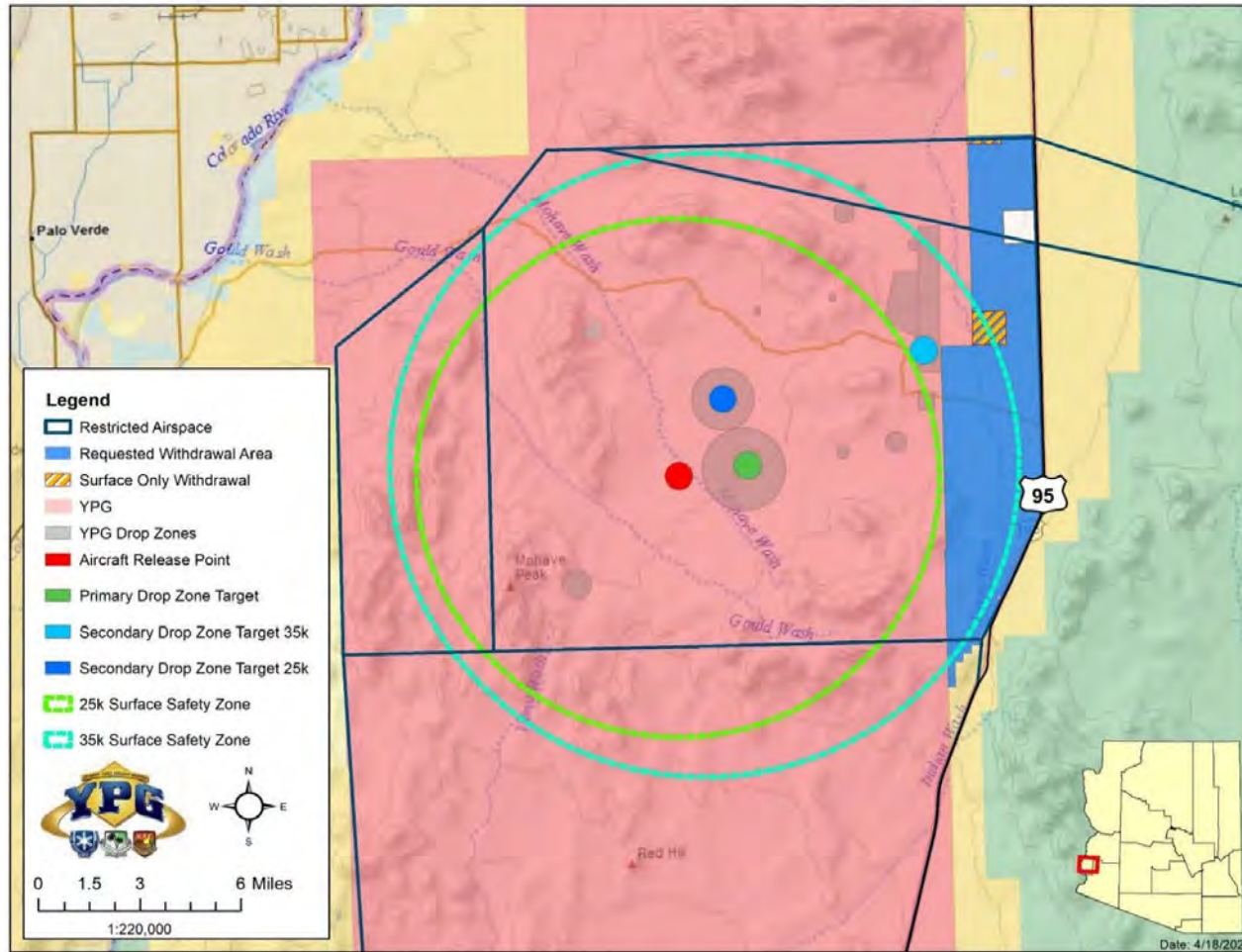
Daniel Steward/ 928-328-2125/Daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil

October 19, 2022





# Proposed Action





## 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.**







## Preliminary Alternatives

**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:**

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

Other alternatives may be determined based on internal/external scoping.





## Preliminary Resources to be Analyzed

- ✓ **Land use, public access, and recreation**
- ✓ **Socioeconomics  
(mining and/or renewable energy development)**
- ✓ **Issues identified during public comment period will be considered and carried forward for analysis if warranted**





## Land Use, Public Access, and Recreation

- ✓ **Proposed Action would reduce public access and opportunities for mining and/or renewable energy development.**
- ✓ **Current recreational activities (i.e., camping, hiking, target shooting, sightseeing, and photography) would be restricted.**
- ✓ **Hunting could be allowed through the YPG Hunting Program.**





## Public Comment and Question and Answer Portion



### Instructions:

- ✓ Phone Line: **571-616-7941**, Meeting ID: **741 886 800#**
- ✓ To raise your hand, use **\*5** on your phone or the raise hand tool.
- ✓ When called upon, use **\*6** to unmute/mute on the phone.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ If you have questions during a comment, please use the chat feature.
- ✓ Be respectful and courteous.





**U.S. ARMY**

## How to Comment Effectively



### Comments should focus on:

- ✓ Potentially affected resources
- ✓ Uses of these lands
- ✓ Other nearby projects
- ✓ Important public use areas.

### LEIS Comments will be due by December 8:

- ✓ Please email comments to [usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil) to be included in the LEIS project record and addressed in the LEIS.



## Additional Project Information



For more information check the project website:  
<https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>

**Yuma Proving Ground Contact:**  
Daniel Steward, (928) 328-2125  
[usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto: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.*



## APPENDIX B

### BLM PUBLIC MEETING NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION MATERIALS

- B1 Department of the Interior *Federal Register* Notice, April 4, 2022
- B2 English Newspaper Advertisements
- B3 Spanish Newspaper Advertisement
- B4 Media Release

## **Appendix B1. BLM *Federal Register* Notice**





19526

Federal Register / Vol. 87, No. 64 / Monday, April 4, 2022 / Notices

consistent with the NEPA process, including a 45-day comment period on the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is anticipated to be available for public review beginning in November 2022. The BLM anticipates releasing a Final EIS in March 2023 and anticipates issuing a Record of Decision in April 2023.

#### Public Scoping Process

This notice of intent initiates the scoping period and public review of the planning criteria, which will guide the development and analysis of the Draft EIS.

The BLM does not intend to hold any public meetings during the public scoping period. Should the BLM later decide to hold public meetings, the specific date(s) and location(s) of any meeting will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers, and the BLM website at: <https://go.usa.gov/xtk6a>.

#### Responsible Official

Assistant Director for Resources and Planning.

#### Nature of Decision To Be Made

Through this process, the BLM will decide whether to approve the herbicide active ingredients identified earlier for use on BLM-managed public lands. This decision will be based on the best available science and current needs for vegetation management. Any authorization to apply any of these active ingredients at a particular site will be made through a separate, site-specific decision and so is not within the scope of the programmatic EIS or potential decision described in this notice.

#### Interdisciplinary Team and Coordination

The BLM will identify and analyze the proposed action and all reasonable alternatives to address their reasonably foreseeable impacts and, in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.14(e), include in that analysis appropriate mitigation measures not already included in the proposed action or alternatives. Mitigation may include avoidance, minimization, rectification, reduction or elimination over time, or compensation, and may be considered at multiple scales, including the landscape scale.

The BLM will coordinate the NEPA process with other required reviews under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1536) and section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108) as provided in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3), including public involvement requirements of Section

106. Information about historic and cultural resources and threatened and endangered species within areas potentially affected by the proposed action or alternatives will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources. The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175, BLM MS 1780, and other Departmental policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration.

Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action that the BLM is evaluating, are invited to participate in the scoping process. If eligible, the BLM may request Federal, State, or local agencies to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as cooperating agencies.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7)

#### David Jenkins,

Assistant Director, Resources and Planning.

[FR Doc. 2022-07017 Filed 4-1-22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-84-P

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

#### Bureau of Land Management

[XXX.LLAZ920000.L19200000.ET0000.  
LRORA2020000, AZA-38426]

#### Notice of Withdrawal Application and Notice of Public Meetings for the Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of withdrawal application.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Army (Army) filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requesting a withdrawal and reservation of 21,200 acres of public lands from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and

geothermal leasing laws, and 800 acres of Federal surface estate public lands from appropriation under the public land laws for an indefinite period for defense purposes as an addition to the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) located in La Paz and Yuma Counties, Arizona, subject to valid existing rights. Any decision about the application will be made by the United States Congress. Publication of this notice temporarily segregates the lands for up to 2 years and announces to the public an opportunity to comment and participate in public meetings on the Army's application for withdrawal.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by July 5, 2022. In addition, the Army and the BLM will host virtual public meetings addressing the requested withdrawal and the associated environmental review process. The dates and instructions for the public meetings are listed in the

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should be sent to the BLM Arizona State Office, 1 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004; faxed to (602) 417-9452; or sent by email to [BLM\\_AZ-Withdrawal\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ-Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov). The BLM will not consider comments via telephone calls.

Information on the proposed action, including the environmental review process, can be viewed at the YPG's website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michael Ouellett, Realty Specialist, BLM Arizona State Office, telephone 602-417-9561, email at [mouellett@blm.gov](mailto:mouellett@blm.gov); or you may contact the BLM Arizona State Office at the earlier-listed address. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In its application, the Army requests the withdrawal and reservation of the specified public lands for military testing and training purposes for an indefinite term, subject to valid existing rights. In accordance with the Engle Act (43 U.S.C. 155-158), because the public lands requested exceed 5,000 acres, this withdrawal request must be directed to Congress.

The following described public lands are the subject of the Army's withdrawal

application, and are temporarily segregated for a period of up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights:

**Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona**

*(Surface and Subsurface)*

- T. 1 N., R. 19 W.,  
 Sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
 Secs. 5 and 8;  
 Sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
 Secs. 17 and 20;  
 Secs. 21 and 28, those portions lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
 Sec. 29;  
 Sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.  
 T. 2 N., R. 19 W.,  
 Sec. 33, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , and S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.  
 T. 1 S., R. 19 W.,  
 Secs. 4 thru 9 and secs. 16 thru 21;  
 Sec. 28, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
 Secs. 29 thru 32;  
 Sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.  
 T. 2 S., R. 19 W.,  
 Sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
 Secs. 5 thru 7;  
 Sec. 8, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
 Sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
 Sec. 17, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting S1/2SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
 Sec. 18;  
 Sec. 19, lots 1 thru 4, NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , and E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
 Sec. 30, lot 1.

The areas described aggregate 21,200 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.

The following-described Federal surface estate public lands are the subject of the Army's withdrawal application, and are temporarily segregated for up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws subject to valid existing rights:

**Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona**

*(Surface Only; Subsurface Excepted—Non-Federal Ownership)*

- T. 1 N., R. 19 W.,  
 Sec. 32.  
 T. 2 N., R. 19 W.,  
 Sec. 32, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , and S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ .

The areas described aggregate approximately 800 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.

The use of a right-of-way, interagency agreement, or cooperative agreement is precluded because of the expected annual usage, daily duration, and impact to the public of the proposed military activities within the requested withdrawal area.

No additional water rights are needed to fulfill the purpose of the requested withdrawal area.

There are no suitable alternative sites within or outside of the YPG boundaries that are compatible with the proposed use since the subject withdrawal area will be an additional surface safety zone adjacent to an existing YPG parachute drop zone. The drop zone was specifically established for its soil attributes, topography, and airspace which are optimal for testing and observation of parachute and air delivery systems. The additional safety zone is needed to enhance the testing of new technology on existing drop zones by preventing public entry into hazardous areas during high-altitude drop operations.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Notice is hereby given for two public meetings in connection with the proposed withdrawal. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the United States, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for social distancing and avoidance of large public gatherings, the BLM and Army will not hold in-person public meetings for this action. The BLM and Army will host the public meetings online and by telephone. There will be two public online meetings scheduled for Tuesday June 7, 2022, at 3 p.m. and Wednesday June 8, 2022, at 5 p.m. Mountain Time. The BLM and Army will publish the instructions on how to access the online meetings in the *Yuma Sun* (Yuma), *Bajo El Sol* (Yuma), and *Desert Messenger* (Quartzsite) newspapers at a minimum of 15 days prior to the meetings and on the website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>.

For a period until April 4, 2024, the lands will be segregated as specified

earlier unless the application is denied or canceled. Licenses, permits, cooperative agreements, or discretionary land-use authorizations of a temporary nature that would not impact the lands may be allowed with the approval of an authorized officer of the BLM during the segregative period.

The application will be processed in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR part 2310.3 and 43 U.S.C. 155-158.

(Authority: 43 U.S.C. 155-158, 43 U.S.C. 1714(b)(1) and 43 CFR 2300)

**Raymond Suazo,**

*Arizona State Director.*

[FR Doc. 2022-07037 Filed 4-1-22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-32-P

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[AA-11054, AA-11061, AA-11075, AA-11077, AA-11078, AA-11085, AA-12439, AA-12456, AA-12551, AA-41487, AA-41489, AA-41490; 22X.LLAK944000. L14100000.HY0000.P]

**Alaska Native Claims Selection**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of decision approving lands for conveyance.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) hereby provides constructive notice that it will issue an appealable decision approving conveyance of the surface and subsurface estates in certain lands to Chugach Alaska Corporation, an Alaska Native regional corporation, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), as amended.

**DATES:** Any party claiming a property interest in the lands affected by the decision may appeal the decision in accordance with the requirements of 43 CFR part 4 within the time limits set out in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

**ADDRESSES:** You may obtain a copy of the decision from the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West Seventh Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7504.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sindra D. Wolfson-Bennison, Land Law Examiner, BLM Alaska State Office, (907) 271-3152 or [swolfson@blm.gov](mailto:swolfson@blm.gov). Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered

## **Appendix B2. BLM English Newspaper Advertisement**

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management  
AZA-38426**

**Notice of Withdrawal Application and Notice of Public Meetings for the Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of withdrawal application.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Army (Army) filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requesting a withdrawal and reservation of 21,200 acres of public lands from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, and 800 acres of Federal surface estate public lands from appropriation under the public land laws for an indefinite period for defense purposes as an addition to the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) located in La Paz and Yuma Counties, Arizona, subject to valid existing rights. Any decision about the application will be made by the United States Congress. Publication of this notice temporarily segregates the lands for up to 2 years and announces to the public an opportunity to comment and participate in public meetings on the Army's application for withdrawal.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by July 5, 2022. In addition, the Army and the BLM will host virtual public meetings addressing the requested withdrawal and the associated environmental review process. The dates and instructions for the public meetings are listed in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should be sent to the BLM Arizona State Office, 1 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004; faxed to (602) 417-9452; or sent by email to [BLM\\_AZ\\_Withdrawal\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ_Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov). The BLM will not consider comments via telephone calls.

Information on the proposed action, including the environmental review process, can be viewed at the YPG's website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michael Ouellett, Realty Specialist, BLM Arizona State Office, telephone 602-417-9561, email at [mouellett@blm.gov](mailto:mouellett@blm.gov); or you may contact the BLM Arizona State Office at the earlier-listed address. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In its application, the Army requests the withdrawal and reservation of the specified public lands for military testing and training purposes for an indefinite term, subject to valid existing rights. In accordance with the Eagle Act (43 U.S.C. 155-158), because the public lands requested exceed 5,000 acres, this withdrawal request must be directed to Congress.

The following described public lands are the subject of the Army's

withdrawal application, and are temporarily segregated for a period of up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights:

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona  
(Surface and Subsurface)

- T. 1 N., R. 19 W.,  
sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
secs. 5 and 8;  
sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
secs. 17 and 20;  
secs. 21 and 28, those portions lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
sec. 29;  
sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.
- T. 2 N., R. 19 W.,  
sec. 33, S1/2SW1/4, and S1/2SE1/4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.
- T. 1 S., R. 19 W.,  
secs. 4 thru 9 and secs. 16 thru 21;  
sec. 28, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
secs. 29 thru 32;  
sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.
- T. 2 S., R. 19 W.,  
sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
secs. 5 thru 7;  
sec. 8, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting NE1/4SW1/4NW1/4SE1/4, W1/2SE1/4NW1/4SE1/4, and NW1/4NE1/4SW1/4SE1/4;  
sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
sec. 17, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting S1/2SW1/4;  
sec. 18;  
sec. 19, lots 1 thru 4, NW1/4 NE1/4, and E1/2NW1/4;  
sec. 30, lot 1.

The areas described aggregate 21,200 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.

The following-described Federal surface estate public lands are the subject of the Army's withdrawal application, and are temporarily segregated for up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws subject to valid existing rights;

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

(Surface Only; Subsurface Excepted - Non-Federal Ownership)

- T. 1 N., R. 19 W.,  
sec. 32.
- T. 2 N., R. 19 W.,

sec. 32, S1/2SW1/4, and S1/2SE1/4.

The areas described aggregate approximately 800 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.

The use of a right-of-way, interagency agreement, or cooperative agreement is precluded because of the expected annual usage, daily duration, and impact to the public of the proposed military activities within the requested withdrawal area.

No additional water rights are needed to fulfill the purpose of the requested withdrawal area.

There are no suitable alternative sites within or outside of the YPG boundaries that are compatible with the proposed use since the subject withdrawal area will be an additional surface safety zone adjacent to an existing YPG parachute drop zone. The drop zone was specifically established for its soil attributes, topography, and airspace which are optimal for testing and observation of parachute and air delivery systems. The additional safety zone is needed to enhance the testing of new technology on existing drop zones by preventing public entry into hazardous areas during high-altitude drop operations.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Notice is hereby given for two public meetings in connection with the proposed withdrawal. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the United States, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for social distancing and avoidance of large public gatherings, the BLM and Army will not hold in-person public meetings for this action. The BLM and Army will host the public meetings online and by telephone. There will be two public online meetings scheduled for Tuesday June 7, 2022, at 3 p.m. and Wednesday June 8, 2022, at 5 p.m. Mountain Time. The BLM and Army will publish the instructions on how to access the online meetings in the *Yuma Sun* (Yuma), *Bajo El Sol* (Yuma), and *Desert Messenger* (Quartzsite) newspapers at a minimum of 15 days prior to the meetings and on the website: <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>.

For a period until April 4, 2024, the lands will be segregated as specified earlier unless the application is denied or canceled. Licenses, permits, cooperative agreements, or discretionary land-use authorizations of a temporary nature that would not impact the lands may be allowed with the approval of an authorized officer of the BLM during the segregative period.

The application will be processed in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR part 2310.3 and 43 U.S.C. 155-158.

{Authority: 43 U.S.C. 155-158, 43 U.S.C. 1714(b)(1) and 43 CFR 2300}

Raymond Suazo  
Arizona State Director

Yuma Sun: April 9, 2022 - 76050

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AFFP  
WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION

**Affidavit of Publication**

STATE OF AZ }                    SS  
COUNTY OF YUMA }

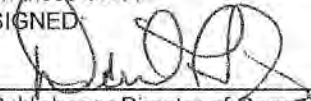
Lisa Reilly or David Fornof, being duly sworn, says:

That (s)he is Publisher or Director of Operations of the Yuma Sun, a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in Yuma, Yuma County, AZ; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was in the published said newspaper on the following dates:

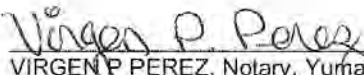
04/09/2022

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED

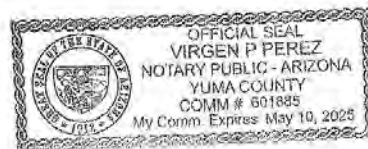
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher or Director of Operations

Subscribed to and sworn to me this 9th day of April 2022.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
VIRGEN P PEREZ, Notary, Yuma County, AZ

My commission expires: May 10, 2025

308731 76050



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LANDS, MINERALS & ENERGY  
1 NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE, SUITE  
PHOENIX AZ 85004

Ad text : DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management  
AZA-38426  
Notice of Withdrawal Application and Notice of Public Meetings for the Yuma  
Proving Ground, Arizona

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of withdrawal application.

SUMMARY: The United States Army (Army) filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requesting a withdrawal and reservation of 21,200 acres of public lands from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, and 800 acres of Federal surface estate public lands from appropriation under the public land laws for an indefinite period for defense purposes as an addition to the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) located in La Paz and Yuma Counties, Arizona, subject to valid existing rights. Any decision about the application will be made by the United States Congress. Publication of this notice temporarily segregates the lands for up to 2 years and announces to the public an opportunity to comment and participate in public meetings on the Army's application for withdrawal.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 5, 2022. In addition, the Army and the BLM will host virtual public meetings addressing the requested withdrawal and the associated environmental review process. The dates and instructions for the public meetings are listed in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be sent to the BLM Arizona State Office, 1 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004; faxed to (602) 417-9452; or sent by email to [BLM\\_AZ\\_Withdrawal\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ_Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov). The BLM will not consider comments via telephone calls.

Information on the proposed action, including the environmental review process, can be viewed at the YPG's website:

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Ouellett, Realty Specialist, BLM Arizona State Office, telephone 602-417-9561, email at [mouellett@blm.gov](mailto:mouellett@blm.gov); or you may contact the BLM Arizona State Office at the earlier-listed address.

Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In its application, the Army requests the withdrawal and reservation of the specified public lands for military testing and training purposes for an indefinite term, subject to valid existing rights. In accordance with the Engle Act (43 U.S.C. 155-158), because the public lands requested exceed 5,000 acres, this withdrawal request must be directed to Congress.

The following described public lands are the subject of the Army's withdrawal application, and are temporarily segregated for a period of up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights:

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

(Surface and Subsurface)

T. 1 N., R. 19 W.,

sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of  
U.S. Route 95;

secs. 5 and 8;

sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of  
U.S. Route 95;

secs. 17 and 20;

secs. 21 and 28, those portions lying westerly of the westerly



right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
sec. 29;  
sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.

- T. 2 N., R. 19 W.,  
sec. 33, S1/2SW1/4, and S1/2SE1/4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95.
- T. 1 S., R. 19 W.,  
secs. 4 thru 9 and secs. 16 thru 21;  
sec. 28, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
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sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;  
sec. 17, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting S1/2SW1/4;  
sec. 18;  
sec. 19, lots 1 thru 4, NW1/4 NE1/4, and E1/2NW1/4;  
sec. 30, lot 1.

The areas described aggregate 21,200 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties. The following-described Federal surface estate public lands are the subject of the Army's withdrawal application, and are temporarily segregated for up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws subject to valid existing rights;

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona  
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- T. 1 N., R. 19 W.,  
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- T. 2 N., R. 19 W.,  
sec. 32, S1/2SW1/4, and S1/2SE1/4.

The areas described aggregate approximately 800 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.

The use of a right-of-way, interagency agreement, or cooperative agreement is precluded because of the expected annual usage, daily duration, and impact to the public of the proposed military activities within the requested withdrawal area.

No additional water rights are needed to fulfill the purpose of the requested withdrawal area.

There are no suitable alternative sites within or outside of the YPG boundaries that are compatible with the proposed use since the subject withdrawal area will be an additional surface safety zone adjacent to an existing YPG parachute drop zone. The drop zone was specifically established for its soil attributes, topography, and airspace which are optimal for testing and observation of parachute and air delivery systems. The additional safety zone is needed to enhance the testing of new technology on existing drop zones by preventing public entry into hazardous areas during high-altitude drop operations.

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will be able to do so.

Notice is hereby given for two public meetings in connection with the proposed withdrawal. In response to the coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic in the United States, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for social distancing and avoidance of large public gatherings, the BLM and Army will not hold in-person public meetings for this action. The BLM and Army will host the public meetings online and by telephone. There will be two public online meetings scheduled for Tuesday June 7, 2022, at 3 p.m. and Wednesday June 8, 2022, at 5 p.m. Mountain Time. The BLM and Army will publish the instructions on how to access the online meetings in the Yuma Sun (Yuma), Bajo El Sol (Yuma), and Desert Messenger (Quartzsite) newspapers at a minimum of 15 days prior to the meetings and on the website:

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

For a period until April 4, 2024, the lands will be segregated as specified earlier unless the application is denied or canceled. Licenses, permits, cooperative agreements, or discretionary land-use authorizations of a temporary nature that would not impact the lands may be allowed with the approval of an authorized officer of the BLM during the segregative period.

The application will be processed in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR part 2310.3 and 43 U.S.C. 155-158.

(Authority: 43 U.S.C. 155-158, 43 U.S.C. 1714(b)(1) and 43 CFR 2300)

Raymond Suazo

Arizona State Director

Yuma Sun: April 9, 2022 - 76050

**PUBLISHER'S NOTICE:**  
All real estate advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination.

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**FREE CLASSIFIEDS\***  
\*for items under \$500 (30 words, time/private party)  
**30 words \$5/ad or  
Twice for \$9**  
Editor@DesertMessenger.com  
**928-916-4235**

**CLASSIFIEDS!** 30 words or only \$5 once, or \$9 two weeks! 928-916-4235. Email [editor@DesertMessenger.com](mailto:editor@DesertMessenger.com).

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**FREE OBITUARY NOTICES** Desert Messenger offers free Memorial notices. You can include a photo of your loved one at no charge. Please mail a short biography of a deceased and photo to [blc@DesertMessenger.com](mailto:blc@DesertMessenger.com). Call Rain at 928-916-4235.

**YOU WOULD LIKE** to make donation to the Friends of the Quartzsite Food Bank make your check out and mail to: Friends of the Quartzsite Food Bank, PO Box 4051, Quartzsite, AZ 85359 or drop it off at the Food Bank weekday and Thursday 8-12. Thank you so much!

**FREE CLASSIFIEDS!** Items total under \$500. Price must be listed. Private party only. 1 month. Yard sales, Wanted, Free, Lost Found. 928-916-4235. [editor@DesertMessenger.com](mailto:editor@DesertMessenger.com).



**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management  
AZA-38426**

Notice of Withdrawal Application and Notice of Public Meetings for the Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of withdrawal application.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Army (Army) filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requesting a withdrawal and reservation of 21,200 acres of public lands from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, and 800 acres of Federal surface estate public lands from appropriation under the public land laws for an indefinite period for defense purposes as an addition to the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) located in La Paz and Yuma Counties, Arizona, subject to valid existing rights. Any decision about the application will be made by the United States Congress. Publication of this notice temporarily segregates the lands for up to 2 years and announces to the public an opportunity to comment and participate in public meetings on the Army's application for withdrawal.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by July 5, 2022. In addition, the Army and the BLM will host virtual public meetings addressing the requested withdrawal and the associated environmental review process. The dates and instructions for the public meetings are listed in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should be sent to the BLM Arizona State Office, 1 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004; faxed to (602)

417-9452; or sent by email to [BLM\\_AZ-Withdrawal\\_Correspondence@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ-Withdrawal_Correspondence@blm.gov). The BLM will not consider comments via electronic mail.

Information on the proposed action, including the environmental review process, can be viewed at the YPG's website: <https://ypp-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michael Ouellet, Realty Specialist, BLM Arizona State Office, telephone 602-417-9561, email at [muellet@blm.gov](mailto:muellet@blm.gov), or you may contact the BLM Arizona State Office at the earlier-listed address, individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In its application, the Army requests the withdrawal and reservation of the specified public lands for military testing and training purposes for an indefinite term, subject to valid existing rights. In accordance with the Engle Act (43 U.S.C. 155-158), because the public lands requested exceed 5,000 acres, this withdrawal request must be directed to Congress.

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**Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona (Surface and Subsurface)**

- T. 1 N., R. 19 W., sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95; secs. 5 and 8;
  - sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95; secs. 17 and 20;
  - secs. 21 and 28, those portions lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - sec. 29;
  - sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - T. 2 N., R. 19 W., sec. 33, S1/2SW1/4, and S1/2SE1/4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - T. 1 S., R. 19 W., secs. 4 thru 9 and secs. 16 thru 21;
  - sec. 28, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - secs. 29 thru 32;
  - sec. 33, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - T. 2 S., R. 19 W., sec. 4, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - secs. 5 thru 7;
  - sec. 8, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting NE1/4SW1/4NW1/4SE1/4, W1/2SE1/4NW1/4SE1/4, and NW1/4NE1/4SW1/4SE1/4;
  - sec. 9, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95;
  - sec. 17, that part lying westerly of the westerly right-of-way of U.S. Route 95, excepting S1/2SW1/4;
  - sec. 18;
  - sec. 19, lots 1 thru 4, NW1/4 NE1/4, and E1/2NW1/4;
  - sec. 30, lot 1.
- The areas described aggregate 21,200 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.
- The following-described Federal surface estate public lands are the subject of

the Army's withdrawal application, and are temporarily segregated for up to 2 years from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws subject to valid existing rights:

**Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona (Surface Only; Subsurface Excepted - Non-Federal Ownership)**

- T. 1 N., R. 19 W., sec. 32;
  - T. 2 N., R. 19 W., sec. 32, S1/2SW1/4, and S1/2SE1/4.
- The areas described aggregate approximately 800 acres in La Paz and Yuma Counties.
- The use of a right-of-way, interagency agreement, or cooperative agreement is precluded because of the expected annual usage, daily duration, and impact to the public of the proposed military activities within the requested withdrawal area.
- No additional water rights are needed to fulfill the purpose of the requested withdrawal area.
- There are no suitable alternative sites within or outside of the YPG boundaries that are compatible with the proposed use since the subject withdrawal area will be an additional surface safety zone adjacent to an existing YPG parachute drop zone. The drop zone was specifically established for its soil attributes, topography, and airspace which are optimal for testing and observation of parachute and air delivery systems. The additional safety zone is needed to enhance the testing of new technology on existing drop zones by preventing public entry into hazardous areas during high-altitude drop operations.
- Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.
- Notice is hereby given for two public meetings in connection with the proposed withdrawal. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the United States, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for social distancing and avoidance of large public gatherings, the BLM and Army will not hold in-person public meetings for this action. The BLM and Army will host the public meetings online and by telephone.
- There will be two public online meetings scheduled for **Tuesday June 7, 2022, at 3 p.m.** and **Wednesday June 8, 2022, at 5 p.m. Mountain Time.** The BLM and Army will publish the instructions on how to access the online meetings in the Yuma Sun (Yuma), Bajo El Sol (Yuma), and Desert Messenger (Quartzsite) newspapers at a minimum of 15 days prior to the meetings and on the website: <https://ypp-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>.
- For a period until April 4, 2024, the lands will be segregated as specified earlier unless the application is denied or canceled. Licenses, permits, cooperative agreements, or discretionary land-use authorizations of a temporary nature that would not impact the lands may be allowed with the approval of an authorized officer of the BLM during the segregative period.
- The application will be processed in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR part 2310.3 and 43 U.S.C. 155-158. (Authority: 43 U.S.C. 155-158, 43 U.S.C. 1714(b)(1) and 43 CFR 2300)
- Raymond Suazo  
Arizona State Director

## **Appendix B3. BLM Spanish Newspaper Advertisement**

**YUMA PROVING GROUND**  
**Reuniones Publicas Virtuales**  
**Junio 7, 3-4 p.m. y Junio 8, 5-6 p.m.**

Dirígete a:

<https://yppg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>, haz click en la liga de la reunión virtual.

El Departamento de Administracion de Tierras a recibido una aplicación para retirar tierras que son parte de la Fuerza Armada, pidiendo una adición de 22,000 acres para Yuma Proving Ground cerca de Yuma, Arizona, como medida de precaución para entrenamientos de entrega aerea sobre zonas existentes adentro del limite actual de perímetro de alcance. Esta petición debera ser aprobada por el Congreso de Estados Unidos. Unete a nosotros en una junta pública virtual para ofrecer comentarios sobre la peticion de retiro de tierras. Pre-registro es recomendada pero no requerida. Los asistentes podran participar por teléfono o computadora.

Se aceptan comentarios hasta el 5 de julio.

**Correo electronico:**

[BLM\\_AZ\\_Withdrawal\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ_Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov)

**Correo:** BLM Arizona Attn: Mike Ouellett, One N. Central Ave, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004

**Fax:** (602) 417-9452

79410

## **Appendix B4. BLM Media Release**

## BLM SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON ARMY REQUEST TO EXPAND YUMA PROVING GROUND

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**PHOENIX** – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking public input on an application from the U.S. Army to add 22,000 acres of public land to the Yuma Proving Ground in southwestern Arizona. The Army requests withdrawal and reservation of this land for a precision parachute safety buffer area that would support its national defense testing and training mission.

The BLM will serve as a cooperating agency to the Army, which will prepare a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement analyzing the environmental consequences of the proposal. The Secretary of the Interior will then make a recommendation to the U.S. Congress, which will make the final decision regarding whether to approve adding the 22,000 acres of public land to Yuma Proving Ground.

“The Yuma Proving Ground is an important component of our national defense,” **said BLM Arizona State Director Raymond Suazo.** “The BLM is committed to assisting the Army with a thorough environmental analysis that will provide the Secretary and the Congress with the information necessary to make their decision.”

Under the Army’s proposal, the public land, which is located adjacent to Yuma Proving Ground near Highway 95, would be reserved for national defense. The land would be withdrawn from future uses under the public land laws—including the mining, mineral, and geothermal leasing laws—subject to valid existing rights. Other land uses, such as permitted recreation and licensed hunting, would be subject to any authorities specified in the enacted legislation.

A Notice of Withdrawal Application and Public Meetings was published in today’s *Federal Register*; this publication segregates the land from appropriation under the laws specified in the notice for two years, initiates a 90-day public comment period, and announces an opportunity to participate in two virtual public meetings that will be hosted jointly by the Army and BLM. The public may submit comments on the Army’s withdrawal application from today until July 5, 2022. Comments may be emailed to [BLM\\_AZ\\_Withdrawal\\_Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ_Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov) or sent through the mail to:

Bureau of Land Management, Arizona  
Attn: Michael Ouellett  
One North Central Avenue  
Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

---

*The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 western states, including Alaska, on behalf of the American people. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

**From:** Briceno, Vanessa

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 7, 2022 3:58 PM

**Cc:** Francisco Sanchez <Francisco.Sanchez@yumacountyaz.gov>; Bruce A. Fenske <bfenske@azdot.gov>; Mike Straub <mstraub@wmidd.org>; Timothy.Parke@aps.com <Timothy.Parke@aps.com>; Amoroso, Nick <Nick\_Amoroso@kindermorgan.com>

**Subject:** Proposed YPG Hwy 95 Withdrawal LEIS - Virtual Public Meeting

Good afternoon,

Friendly reminder that today June 7 at 3:00pm is the first virtual public meeting for the proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal LEIS. The second meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2022 at 5:00pm.

The Microsoft Teams meeting links are located on the YPG website below:

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

## Public Meetings

A high priority for the YPG Environmental Sciences Division is to promote open communication and coordination on environmental issues; sharing information and success stories; increasing involvement and commitment among all parties. The YPG military community must be "environmentally sustainable," which means we must go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations towards long-term ...

[ypg-environmental.com](https://ypg-environmental.com)

Thank you,

Vanessa Briceño, Realty Specialist

Bureau of Land Management | Interior Region 8 (Lower Colorado Basin)

Yuma Field Office

7341 E. 30th Street, Suite A | Yuma, AZ 85365

Tel. 928-317-3290 | Fax 928-317-3250 | Email: [vbriceno@blm.gov](mailto:vbriceno@blm.gov)

[BLM WebApp Viewer](#)



**From:** Castro, Raymond  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 8, 2022 1:34 PM  
**To:** bjfuller32@gmail.com <bjfuller32@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Highway 95 YPG Land Withdrawal

Bruce,

The virtual public meeting information is below:

**Wednesday, June 8, 2022 5:00 PM-7:00 PM**

To join through your web browser or Microsoft Teams, paste the following into your browser:

[https://dod.teams.microsoft.us//meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting\\_cdc7a9606e14d83bbace92563930691%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22459a70db-7b43-4f6a-a5bf-eb8721fd5717%22%7d](https://dod.teams.microsoft.us//meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting_cdc7a9606e14d83bbace92563930691%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22fae6d70f-954b-4811-92b6-0530d6f84c43%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22459a70db-7b43-4f6a-a5bf-eb8721fd5717%22%7d)

To Join by phone:

**Toll number: +1 571-616-7941**

**Conference ID: 330 080 043#**

Raymond Castro Jr.  
Assistant Field Manager Recreation & Visitor Services (Detailed)  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Bureau of Land Management | Yuma Field Office  
Department of the Interior Region 8  
Phone: 928-317-3251

**From:** Timothy.Parke@aps.com <Timothy.Parke@aps.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2022 3:24 PM  
**To:** Briceno, Vanessa <vbriceno@blm.gov>; Paul.Baumgardt@aps.com <Paul.Baumgardt@aps.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal - Virtual Public Meeting

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Thanks Vanessa, I will join the call.

**TIM PARKE**  
Land Agent II, Land Services Department  
P.O. Box 53933, Phoenix, AZ 85072, M.S. 3286  
Cell 602-297-1500  
[timothy.parke@aps.com](mailto:timothy.parke@aps.com) **aps.com**

**From:** Briceno, Vanessa <vbriceno@blm.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2022 3:21 PM  
**To:** Parke, Timothy <Timothy.Parke@aps.com>; Baumgardt, Paul <Paul.Baumgardt@aps.com>  
**Subject:** YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal - Virtual Public Meeting

**\*\*\*CAUTION\*\*\*** **\*\*\*CAUTION\*\*\*** **\*\*\*CAUTION\*\*\***  
This e-mail is from an **EXTERNAL** address ([vbriceno@blm.gov](mailto:vbriceno@blm.gov)). **DO NOT** click on links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. If you suspect this message to be phishing, please report it to the APS Cyber Defense Center at [ACDC@aps.com](mailto:ACDC@aps.com).

Good afternoon Tim and Paul,

I apologize for the short notice but wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that YPG and BLM will be holding a virtual public meeting to solicit public comments on the proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal. We had the the first meeting yesterday and there will be a second meeting today.

- October 20, 2022 at 5:00pm (AZ Time)

The MS Teams link for the virtual public meeting is located on the below website. Information on the proposed withdrawal is also located on the website.

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

### Public Meetings - YPG Environmental

A high priority for the YPG Environmental Sciences Division is to promote open communication and coordination on environmental issues-sharing information and success stories, increasing involvement and commitment among all parties. The YPG military community must be "environmentally sustainable," which means we must go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations towards long-term ...

[ypg-environmental.com](http://ypg-environmental.com)

Thank you,  
Vanessa Briceño, Realty Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management | Interior Region 8 (Lower Colorado Basin)  
Yuma Field Office  
7341 E. 30th Street, Suite A | Yuma, AZ 85365  
Tel. 928-317-3290 | Fax 928-317-3250 | Email: [vbriceno@blm.gov](mailto:vbriceno@blm.gov)  
[BLM WebApp Viewer](#)

--- NOTICE ---

This message is for the designated recipient only and may contain confidential, privileged or proprietary information. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original and any copy or printout. Unintended recipients are prohibited from making any other use of this e-mail. Although we have taken reasonable precautions to ensure no viruses are present in this e-mail,

**From:** Briceno, Vanessa  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2022 3:25 PM  
**To:** Amoroso, Nick <Nick\_Amoroso@kindermorgan.com>  
**Subject:** Proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal - Virtual Public Meeting

Good afternoon Nick,

I apologize for the short notice but wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that YPG and BLM will be holding a virtual public meeting to solicit public comments on the proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal. We had the the first meeting yesterday and there will be a second meeting today.

- October 20, 2022 at 5:00pm (AZ Time)

The MS Teams link for the virtual public meeting is located on the below website. Information on the proposed withdrawal is also located on the website.

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

### Public Meetings - YPG Environmental

A high priority for the YPG Environmental Sciences Division is to promote open communication and coordination on environmental issues- sharing information and success stories, increasing involvement and commitment among all parties. The YPG military community must be "environmentally sustainable," which means we must go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations towards long-term ...

[ypg-environmental.com](https://ypg-environmental.com)

Thank you,  
Vanessa Briceño, Realty Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management | Interior Region 8 (Lower Colorado Basin)  
Yuma Field Office  
7341 E. 30th Street, Suite A | Yuma, AZ 85365  
Tel. 928-317-3290 | Fax 928-317-3250 | Email: vbriceno@blm.gov  
[BLM WebApp Viewer](#)

**From:** Briceno, Vanessa  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2022 3:11 PM  
**To:** Lowell Rogers <lowell.rogers@oakstrategic.com>  
**Cc:** Randy Schulze <rschulze@cbxinternational.net>  
**Subject:** Virtual Public Meeting - Proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal Project

Good afternoon Lowell,

I realized I keep mentioning during the CIC meetings that I have projects with YPG. Therefore, I wanted to take this opportunity to inform you that YPG and BLM will be holding a virtual public meeting to solicit public comments on the proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal. We had the the first meeting yesterday and there will be a second meeting today. I apologize for the short notice.

- October 20, 2022 at 5:00pm (AZ Time)

The MS Teams link for the virtual public meeting is located on the below website. Information on the proposed withdrawal is also located on the website.

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

### Public Meetings - YPG Environmental

A high priority for the YPG Environmental Sciences Division is to promote open communication and coordination on environmental issues- sharing information and success stories, increasing involvement and commitment among all parties. The YPG military community must be "environmentally sustainable," which means we must go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations towards long-term ...

[ypg-environmental.com](https://ypg-environmental.com)

Thank you,  
Vanessa Briceño, Realty Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management | Interior Region 8 (Lower Colorado Basin)  
Yuma Field Office  
7341 E. 30th Street, Suite A | Yuma, AZ 85365  
Tel. 928-317-3290 | Fax 928-317-3250 | Email: vbriceno@blm.gov  
[BLM WebApp Viewer](#)

---

**From:** Briceno, Vanessa  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2022 3:30 PM  
**To:** Grinage, Mark <Grinage@WAPA.GOV>  
**Subject:** Proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal - Virtual Public Meeting

Good afternoon Mark,

I apologize for the short notice but wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that YPG and BLM will be holding a virtual public meeting to solicit public comments on the proposed YPG Highway 95 Withdrawal. We had the the first meeting yesterday and there will be a second meeting today.

- October 20, 2022 at 5:00pm (AZ Time)

The MS Teams link for the virtual public meeting is located on the below website.

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

### Public Meetings - YPG Environmental

A high priority for the YPG Environmental Sciences Division is to promote open communication and coordination on environmental issues- sharing information and success stories, increasing involvement and commitment among all parties. The YPG military community must be "environmentally sustainable," which means we must go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations towards long-term ...

ypg-environmental.com

Thank you,  
Vanessa Briceño, Realty Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management | Interior Region 8 (Lower Colorado Basin)  
Yuma Field Office  
7341 E. 30th Street, Suite A | Yuma, AZ 85365  
Tel. 928-317-3290 | Fax 928-317-3250 | Email: vbriceno@blm.gov  
[BLM WebApp Viewer](#)

**APPENDIX C**

**TRIBAL COMMUNICATION**

- C1 Transmittal Letter
- C2 Tribal Responses

## **Appendix C1. Transmittal Letter**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, YUMA  
301 C STREET  
YUMA AZ 85365-9498

April 7, 2022

In Reply Refer To:  
LEIS Highway 95 Land Withdrawal

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

The U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (USAG YPG) is proposing to Congress a land withdrawal of approximately 22,000 acres from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Yuma Field Office for military purposes. USAG YPG will be developing a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The withdrawal would allow USAG YPG to accommodate current test requirements, enhance soldier readiness, and ensure public safety. The withdrawal would accommodate larger surface safety zones to allow for higher altitude parachute releases and would create a safety buffer to allow the Army to conduct more complex air delivery and test scenarios.

The requested withdrawal area abuts the Cibola Range and would establish Highway 95 as a distinct physical landmark of the USAG YPG boundary. The requested withdrawal is located in Sections 32 and 33, Township 2 North (T2N), Range 19 West (R19W); Sections 4, 5, 8, 9, 17, 20, 21, 28, 29, 32, and 33, T1N, R19W; Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33, T1S, R19W; and Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, and 30, T2S, R19W (Gila and Salt River Base Line and Meridian), as depicted on the USGS Trigo Pass, Livingston Hills NW, Stone Cabin, Tweed Mine, and Red Hill NE 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps (see enclosed map).

The BLM is a cooperating agency on the LEIS and published a Notice of Withdrawal Application in the April 4, 2022, Federal Register. USAG YPG will be publishing a Notice of Intent to prepare a LEIS concurrent with the BLM Notice. The BLM publication triggered a 90-day public comment period. USAG YPG and the BLM will hold two public meetings via Zoom and teleconference. The links for the individual meetings and more information can be found about the land withdrawal on the USAG YPG Environmental webpage at <https://ypg-environmental.com/highway-95-land-withdrawal-leis/>. The meetings will be held at the following times:



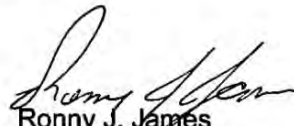
-2-

- June 7, 2022 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm MST
- June 8, 2022 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm MST

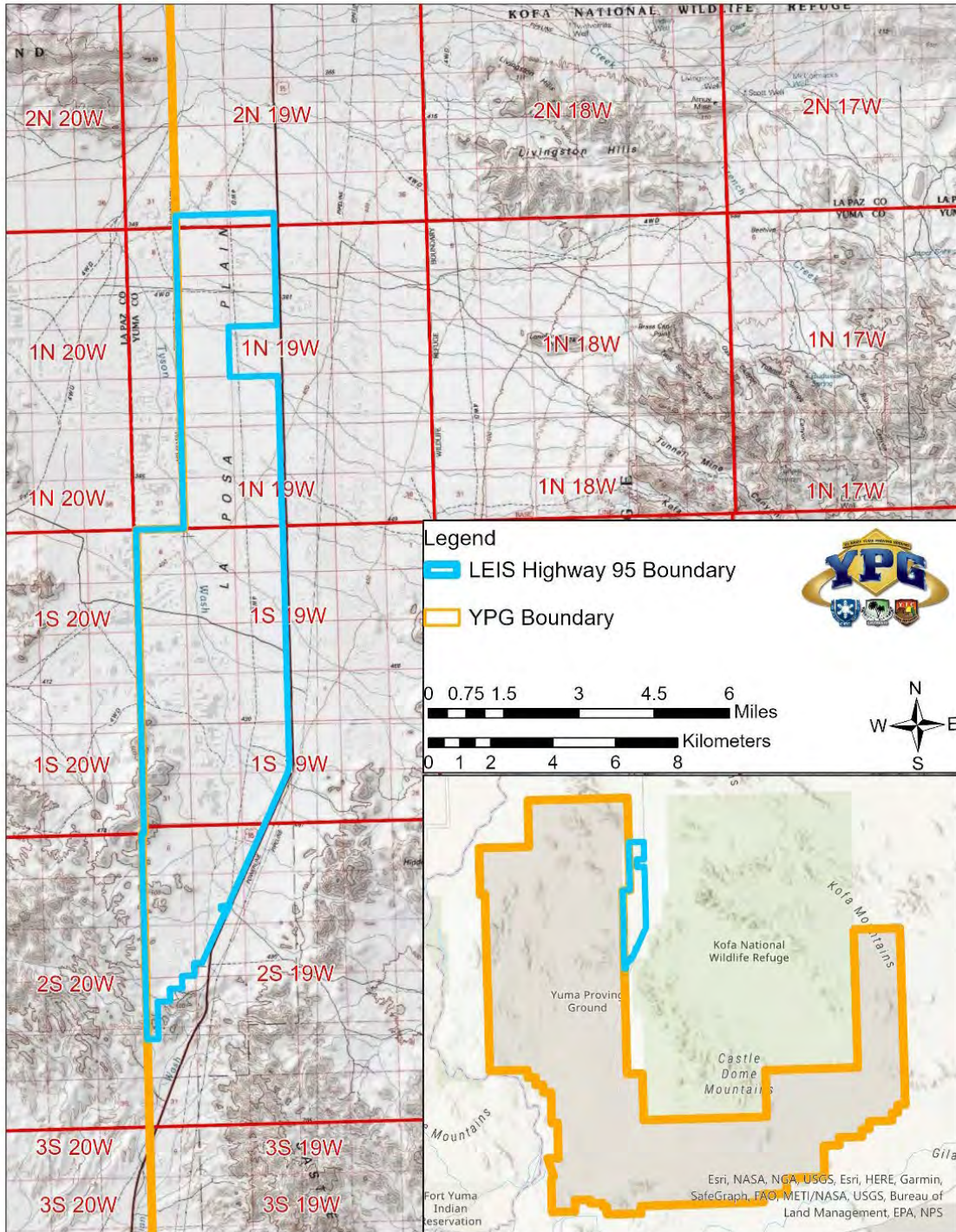
The Ak-Chin Indian Community, the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, the Cocopah Indian Tribe, the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Ft McDowell Yavapai Nation, the Fort Mohave Indian Tribe, the Fort Yuma-Quechan Indian Tribe, the Gila River Indian Community, the Hopi Tribe, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Tohono O'odham Nation, the Yavapai-Apache Nation, and the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe have been sent similar copies of this letter.

USAG YPG strives to fully integrate the principles of meaningful communication with the Tribes. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact USAG YPG Cultural Resource Manager Catherine Vaughn at (928) 328-2520 or email [catherine.s.vaughn2.civ@army.mil](mailto:catherine.s.vaughn2.civ@army.mil).

Sincerely,

  
Ronny J. James  
Garrison Manager

LEIS Highway 95 Land Withdrawal  
Enclosure



## **Appendix C2. Tribal Responses**



4/11/22 vj  
4/21/22 vj  
4/21/22 vj

SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE  
Historic Preservation & Archaeology Department  
P.O. Box 0  
San Carlos Arizona 85550  
Tel. (928) 475-5797. [apachexcm@yahon.com](mailto:apachexcm@yahon.com)

**Tribal Consultation Response Letter**

Date: April 11, 2022  
Contact Name: Ronny J. James (928) 328-2520/Catherine.s.vaughn2.civ@army.mil  
Company: Department of the Army  
Address: 301 C Street Yuma, AZ 85365-9498  
Project Name/#: LEIS Highway 95 Land Withdrawal

Dear Sir or Madam:

Under Section 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are replying to the above referenced project. Please see the appropriate marked circle, including the signatures of Vernelda Grant, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and the concurrence of the Chairman of the San Carlos Apache Tribe:

- NO INTEREST/NO FURTHER CONSULTATION/NO FUTURE UPDATES**  
We defer to the Tribe located nearest to the project area.
- CONCURRENCE WITH REPORT FINDINGS & THANK YOU**
- REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**  
I require additional information in order to provide a finding of effect for this proposed undertaking, i.e. Project description \_\_\_ Map \_\_\_ Photos \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- NO EFFECT**  
I have determined that there are no properties of religious and cultural significance to the San Carlos Apache Tribe that are listed on the National Register within the area of potential effect or that the proposed project will have no effect on any such properties that may be present.
- NO ADVERSE EFFECT**  
Properties of cultural and religious significance within the area of effect have been identified that are eligible for listing in the National Register for which there would be no adverse effect as a result of the proposed project.
- ADVERSE EFFECT**  
I have identified properties of cultural and religious significance within the area of potential effect that are eligible for listing in the National Register. I believe the proposed project would cause an adverse effect on these properties. Please contact the THPO for further discussion.

We were taught traditionally not to disturb the natural world in a significant way, and that to do so may cause harm to oneself or one's family. Apache resources can be best protected by managing the land to be as natural as it was in pre-1870s settlement times. Please contact the THPO, if there is a change in any portion of the project, especially if Apache cultural resources are found at any phase of planning and construction. Thank you for contacting the San Carlos Apache Tribe, your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

DIRECTOR/THPO: Vernelda J. Grant 4/20/22  
 Vernelda J. Grant, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Date

CONCURRENCE: Terry Rambler 4/21/22  
 Terry Rambler, Tribal Chairman Date

**Vaughn, Catherine S CIV (USA)**

---

**From:** Vanessa Nosie <vnosie11@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 21, 2022 6:58 PM  
**To:** catherine.s.vaughn2.civ@mail.mil  
**Cc:** Vernelda Grant  
**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] LEIS Highway 95 Land Withdrawal  
**Attachments:** LEIS Highway 95 Land Withdrawal.pdf

Ms. Vaughn,

The attached is a signed Tribal Consultation Response Letter. Please review, if you have any questions contact Vernelda Grant, Director/THPO at 928-475-5797 or email [apachevern@yahoo.com](mailto:apachevern@yahoo.com) <<mailto:apachevern@yahoo.com>>

Thank you,

Vanessa Nosie, Archaeology-Aide  
San Carlos Apache Tribe  
Archaeology/THPO Department

**Vaughn, Catherine S CIV (USA)**

---

**From:** Linda Ogo <logo@ypit.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 27, 2022 12:06 PM  
**To:** Vaughn, Catherine S CIV (USA)  
**Subject:** [Non-DoD Source] YPG Land Withdrawal  
**Attachments:** YPG land withddrawal\_051622.doc.pdf

(Resending – for your records. Internet issues at YPIT has resulted in several responses to agencies not being received around this time period.

)

Hello Catherine,

Attached, please find our response to your letter dated April 7, 2022 regarding the U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (USAG YPG) proposal to Congress for a land withdrawal of approximately 22,000 acres from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Yuma Field Office for military purposes.

Please let me know should you have any questions.

Thank you,

Linda

Linda Ogo

## **APPENDIX D**

### **LEIS SCOPING COMMENTS AND INFORMATION REQUESTS**

- D1 LEIS Comments
- D2 BLM Withdrawal Application Comments

## **Appendix D1. LEIS Comments**



From: Juan Leal Rubio <[Juan.Leal-Rubio@yumacountyaz.gov](mailto:Juan.Leal-Rubio@yumacountyaz.gov)>  
Sent: Friday, September 16, 2022 9:45 AM  
To: [daniel.m.steward.civ@mail.mil](mailto:daniel.m.steward.civ@mail.mil)  
Cc: Maggie Castro <[Maggie.Castro@yumacountyaz.gov](mailto:Maggie.Castro@yumacountyaz.gov)>  
Subject: [URL Verdict: Neutral][Non-DoD Source] RE: Request for Comments:  
Dept of Army LEIS for withdrawal of BLM land

All active links contained in this email were disabled. Please verify the identity of the sender, and confirm the authenticity of all links contained within the message prior to copying and pasting the address to a Web browser.

---

Hello Daniel,

Staff has identified three privately owned parcels (APN's 101-00-002, -003, and 113-00-003) which would be surrounded by the requested withdrawal area. APN's 101-00-002 and -003 are zoned Rural Area-20 acre minimum, and APN 113-00-003 is zoned General Commercial. Can you please explain the effect and/or development limitations this proposal could bring to the privately owned parcels?

Thank you,

Juan Leal Rubio, Senior Planner

Department of Development Services/Planning & Zoning Divison

2351 W. 26th Street Yuma, AZ 85364

(928) 817-5176 | Fax (928) 817-5020

If you would like to provide comments regarding the service you received, please click the following link: Yuma County : Customer Survey < Caution-<https://www.yumacountyaz.gov/government/development-services/customer-survey> >

From: Maggie Castro <[Maggie.Castro@yumacountyaz.gov](mailto:Maggie.Castro@yumacountyaz.gov)>  
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2022 4:22 PM  
To: Juan Leal Rubio <[Juan.Leal-Rubio@yumacountyaz.gov](mailto:Juan.Leal-Rubio@yumacountyaz.gov)>  
Subject: Request for Comments: Dept of Army LEIS for withdrawal of BLM land

Please review and comment.



Douglas A. Ducey  
Governor

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



Misael Cabrera  
Director

September 19, 2022  
FPU23-060

Bureau of Land Management  
Arizona State Office  
1 North Central Ave  
Suite 800  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

RE: Subject on Yuma Proving Ground Highway 95 Addition Proposed Withdrawal for Land Management Evaluation AZA-38445 (C020) 2300

To Whom it May Concern:

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) notice of proposed withdrawal of public lands adjacent to Yuma Proving Ground along U.S. Route 95 in order for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Army (Army) to conduct a land management evolution.

ADEQ's Federal Projects Unit has completed the notice review and provides the following concern:

Potential Explosive Hazards

During the land management evaluation activities visitors to the site should be made aware of the potential for surface and subsurface explosive hazards. ADEQ advises to directly contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Los Angeles District Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) Program as the lead Federal agency that can aid with construction support, if necessary, and provide additional information on the site activities for cleanup efforts.

The full 22,000 acres proposed for withdrawal lies within the Former Laguna Maneuver Area FUDS (J09AZ043910). Laguna Maneuver Area No. 10 consist of two (2) Munitions Response Sites (MRS): MRS01 – Stone Cabin Impact Area and MRS02 – Maneuver Area #1. Risk remains at MRS01 for munitions and explosives of concern (MEC).

The USACE 2010 Final Site Inspection (SI) Report did not identify MEC at MRS01, but munitions debris (MD) from 60mm High Explosive (HE) mortars were found. The confirmed presence of HE MD warranted a Remedial Investigation (RI) for MRS01 and the SI also recommended expanding the entire eastern boundary farther east to comprise areas where MRS01 associated MD was observed.

Main Office  
1110 W. Washington Street • Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 771-2300

Southern Regional Office  
400 W. Congress Street • Suite 433 • Tucson, AZ 85701  
(520) 628-6733

[www.azdeq.gov](http://www.azdeq.gov)  
printed on recycled paper

September 19, 2022  
FPU23-060  
Page 2 of 2

The USACE has not acquired funding to initiate the RI at MRS01 – Stone Cabin Impact Area. The site is on the USACE’s list of Interim Risk Management properties whereby notification and safety education brochures are mailed to landowners at a minimum of every 5 years. The most recent mailing information for the Stone Cabin Impact Area was conducted in 2021 (enclosed).

Please copy myself, [romanoff.natalie@azdeq.gov](mailto:romanoff.natalie@azdeq.gov) and [harker.karin@azdeq.gov](mailto:harker.karin@azdeq.gov) on all future correspondence and invitations to participate.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,



Natalie Romanoff  
FPU Project Manager  
Remedial Projects Section, ADEQ

Encl: 3Rs Safety Guide, Former Laguna Maneuver Area, Stone Cabin Impact Area

From: Richard Spotts <[raspotts2@gmail.com](mailto:raspotts2@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2022 6:46 PM  
To: USARMY YPG IMCOM Mailbox NEPA <[usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)>;  
Steward, Daniel M CIV USARMY USAG (USA) <[daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil](mailto:daniel.m.steward.civ@army.mil)>  
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] My scoping comments on LEIS for proposed public land withdrawal near ASR 95, Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona

September 21, 2022

RE: My scoping comments on Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for proposed public land withdrawal near Arizona State Route 95, Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona

Dear Army and Defense Department officials:

Please accept, carefully review, respond to in the Draft LEIS, and include in this NEPA project file my following comments on the above-referenced matter.

I reviewed the recently published Notice of Intent in the Federal Register. I believe that this is a reasonable and justified proposed public land withdrawal. I am generally familiar with the area that would be withdrawn.

President Biden has properly indicated that the climate and extinction crises are real, connected, rapidly getting worse, and require bold and innovative solutions. Aside from environmental concerns, these crises also affect national security. The climate crisis is causing massive human suffering which increases the pressures for difficult human migrations and heightens risks of armed conflicts over scarce resources. The extinction crisis undermines the integrity of natural systems that human societies depend upon, and may contribute to higher pandemic risks.

For purposes of scoping for this Draft LEIS, I believe that this NEPA analysis should include the relative pros and cons of how this proposed withdrawal would affect these crises. The agency purpose and need statement should include both military and environmental protection objectives. As various options are developed, the Draft LEIS should use these options to prepare a reasonable range of alternatives. Then the question for each alternative becomes: how would implementing it advance solutions to or contribute to worsening these crises?

On these currently BLM managed lands, three of the greatest environmental threats are likely to be cattle grazing, OHV recreation, and increasing fires from invasive plants that change fuel loads and fire ecology in the desert. For each alternative, how would the withdrawal affect those threats? Would the withdrawal stop harmful cattle grazing and OHV recreation but perhaps worsen the fire threat from live fire military operations? Would there be more or less ground disturbing activities after the withdrawal? Would more military vehicles be driving cross-country and creating new routes? How would such military driving compare with existing OHV driving in the same area?

On cattle grazing, please review the relevant attachment. It describes the climate change related benefits if this withdrawal causes the reduction or elimination of BLM authorized cattle grazing in this area.

From the standpoint of solutions to the climate and extinction crises, the proposed withdrawal may have net environmental benefits if it prevents the continuation of harmful BLM authorized land uses and reduces the current cumulative level of ground disturbance.

The prolonged drought and competition from invasive plant species have already severely stressed the native plant and wildlife species in this area. Anything that would reduce the current human sources of additional stress on them would be beneficial. For example, there are Sonoran desert tortoises in this proposed withdrawal area. They are generally declining in population and are being considered for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. Cattle grazing and OHV recreation are known threats to these tortoises. Would the withdrawal help or harm this declining species? It would be wonderful if this withdrawal improves both military training and wildlife conservation.

Please add me to the contact list and let me know when this Draft LEIS is available for public review and comment. I hope that my scoping comments are helpful. I wish you success with this important planning and NEPA analysis process.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Spotts  
255 North 2790 East  
Saint George Utah 84790  
[raspotts2@gmail.com](mailto:raspotts2@gmail.com) <<mailto:raspotts2@gmail.com>>

cc: Interested parties

Attachment



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

December 1, 2022

Mr. Daniel Steward  
Environmental Sciences Division  
U.S. Army Garrison - Yuma Proving Ground  
301 C St., Bldg. 307  
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Subject: Scoping Comments for the Proposed Public Land Withdrawal in Vicinity of Arizona State Route 95, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), Arizona

Dear Mr. Steward:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Federal Register Notice published on September 9, 2022 requesting comments on the Department of the Army's decision to prepare a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for the subject action. Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) states that the proposed land withdrawal would provide approximately 22,000 acres of additional area for testing and training at YPG and is needed as a safety buffer for testing advanced air delivery technologies and aviation systems, primarily to test parachute systems' full capabilities. Higher-elevation and GPS-guided air delivery methods are designed to ensure payloads - a palletized package of various weights and items, such as a vehicle, equipment, and/or supplies - arrive at the intended location. The NOI states that the withdrawn land may also be used for other training and testing activities which are not known at this time but would be subject to additional NEPA analysis.

We appreciate the information provided at the public meeting and offers to answer any additional questions. We have the following comments for your consideration when preparing the Draft LEIS:

**Munitions/Future training use:** During the public meeting, the Army indicated that the Proposed Action would not result in increased training but in increased capabilities. It also indicated that munitions use would not increase with the Proposed Action, nor would targets for their use be included on YPG areas that would gain the additional safety buffer. While the NOI states that additional training and testing would receive NEPA analysis, we recommend the Army disclose potential additional training that could occur in the future that would be enabled by this land withdrawal.

**Fencing/Impacts to Wildlife:** We appreciate the additional information, in response to our inquiry, regarding fencing for the Proposed Action. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Army indicated that currently there is no fencing on the eastern border of the YPG near the proposed land withdrawal and none is proposed for this action. The NOI indicates that the benefit of the land extension is to provide a clear boundary between YPG and BLM land and would establish SR 95 highway as a distinct physical landmark for the YPG boundary. We appreciate that fencing will not be included and *we recommend this be specifically identified in the project description.*

Avoiding fencing is important because, according to the 2010 Yuma Resource Management Plan, a wildlife movement corridor is located on the land proposed for withdrawal<sup>1</sup> and this corridor is used by bighorn sheep.<sup>2</sup> This is also potentially important for species like the Sonoran pronghorn, movements of which are being restricted by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's border wall to the south. In general, climate change may cause large wildlife species to disperse to new areas for their adaptive capacity and survival. The draft Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan indicates that the nonessential experimental population of Sonoran pronghorn will likely result in additional animals occurring on YPG; therefore, efforts should be made to ensure the proposed action does not hinder their movement, nor that of other wildlife species.

**Visual Resources:** Highway 95 was nominated as a National Scenic Byway between the Town of Quartzsite and Yuma, Arizona<sup>3</sup> due to its scenic, historic, natural, and recreational qualities.<sup>4</sup> Since we understand that fencing is not proposed, the DLEIS should discuss visual resource impacts from the additional signage or any additional facilities that might be constructed. We note that the Yuma RMP FEIS states that “the removal of lands along Highway 95 from the Yuma Field Office’s jurisdiction would decrease the BLM’s ability to ensure that future projects are appropriately mitigated to protect the Byway’s identified resource values” (p. 4-129). We recommend discussing how the Army would ensure the visual character of Highway 95 is protected or enhanced.

**Kofa National Wildlife Refuge:** The DLEIS should also discuss whether the Proposed Action could impact the nearby Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, which was established for the protection of desert bighorn sheep and other native wildlife. Indicate whether the military actions that the land withdrawal would enable could result in new impacts to the desert bighorn sheep or other wildlife. Discuss whether the Proposed Action could lead to additional road closures in the Refuge<sup>5</sup> or affect trail usage.

**Utility Corridor/Impacts on Renewable Energy Generation:** The Army and BLM indicated, during the public meeting, that the land proposed for withdrawal contains a utility corridor and that the land withdrawal would preclude renewable energy development utilizing that transmission infrastructure. The corridor is a designated energy corridor in Arizona as indicated in BLM’s resource management plan. The Yuma RMP FEIS describes it as “an important energy corridor” (Page 4-130) and indicates that there are numerous isolated spots of medium potential for wind energy development along Highway 95 from Yuma to the northern border of the planning area (p. 3-104). We also learned that the BLM may have received some soft interest in solar development due to the presence of the transmission corridor but does not have any current applications for renewable energy development in this area.<sup>6</sup> It is not clear whether the land withdrawal would hinder renewable energy development, which is so vital to our Nation’s response to the climate crisis. The DLEIS should discuss how the land withdrawal could affect the use of the transmission infrastructure, especially for renewable energy development.

<sup>1</sup> BLM. 2010. *Yuma Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan*. Yuma Field Office. Signed January 29, 2010. Map 2-6 - Wildlife Habitat Management Areas. Available:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/public\\_projects/lup/68418/87828/105163/Yuma-ROD-ARMPcomplete.pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/public_projects/lup/68418/87828/105163/Yuma-ROD-ARMPcomplete.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> BLM. 2008. *Yuma Field Office Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*. Yuma Field Office. Page 3-38. Available: [https://eplanning.blm.gov/public\\_projects/lup/68418/87827/105162/YumaPRMP-FEIS\\_complete-1014pp.pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/public_projects/lup/68418/87827/105162/YumaPRMP-FEIS_complete-1014pp.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Yuma Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan*, Page ROD-4

<sup>4</sup> *Yuma Field Office Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, Page 4-129

<sup>5</sup> The [Kofa NWR website](#) states that on rare occasions, southern portions of the refuge may be temporarily closed for public safety due to military testing.

<sup>6</sup> Email correspondence from Derek Eysenbach, BLM, to Jason Gerdes, EPA, October 26, 2022

### Impacts from the Loss of Public Land

The NOI indicates that the Army is proposing a withdrawal for an indefinite period—i.e., until there is no longer a military need for the land. Military land withdrawals generally have occurred for designated time periods and have required renewals. BLM has noted in the past<sup>7</sup> the importance of the periodic review by the DoD and DOI that is a part of the legislative withdrawal process, stating that it is vital to promoting the high-quality stewardship and management of the public lands. “The process of withdrawing lands for a finite period of time takes into account a much longer and broader view of the national interest in the lands the BLM manages on behalf of the public”. We recommend the Army consider alternatives that include time periods for the withdrawal, for the reasons cited, or discuss why this is not being considered.

If the Army and BLM will not propose alternatives that include time periods that allow for renewals, which has been the usual practice, the impact would be more significant, as it would likely result in the permanent (foreseeable) loss of public land accessible by the American people. We recommend the DLEIS address this topic in the “longer and broader view of the national interest” in public lands. In other words, while recreational values (i.e. the land proposed for withdrawal is in the designated BLM Highway 95 Recreation Management Zone)<sup>8</sup> and consumptive uses can be quantified and discussed for the land to be withdrawn, there is also the longer broader view that incorporates the intangible value of public lands to Americans in general. These values may not easily be measured but NEPA directs agencies to attempt to “ensure that presently unquantified environmental amenities and values be given appropriate consideration” in decision-making (40 CFR 1507.2 (b)). Cumulative loss of public land for military use has been considerable.<sup>9</sup>

This more significant impact from the loss of public land would warrant a discussion of mitigation for this loss, and again, a longer broader view is suggested. One possible mitigation could be to provide further protections of existing lands that are of value to the American people on YPG and/or on BLM land.<sup>10</sup> We recommend the concept of mitigation for loss of public lands (land relationship) be included in the DLEIS and we note that CEQ provides a broad definition of mitigation.<sup>11</sup>

### Consultation with Tribes

The DLEIS should describe the tribal consultation process, which is very important since there are hundreds of culturally significant sites within the modern boundaries of YPG alone. The Army and BLM might find the document *Tribal Consultation: Best Practices in Historic Preservation*,<sup>12</sup> published by the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, to be useful. It is most important to consult with tribes early; therefore, we recommend a summary of the early results of tribal consultation be included in the DLEIS, identifying the main concerns expressed by tribes, along with potential ways the concerns could be addressed.

<sup>7</sup>BLM testimony on H.R. 4253, Bureau of Land Management Withdrawn Military Lands Efficiency and Savings Act March 25, 2014. [https://www.doi.gov/ocl/hearings/113/hr4253\\_032514#](https://www.doi.gov/ocl/hearings/113/hr4253_032514#)

<sup>8</sup> Map 2-10 *Recreation Management Allocations*, Yuma Resource Management Plan 2010

<sup>9</sup> BLM testimony on H.R. 4253. As of 2014, approximately 16 million acres of public lands were withdrawn and reserved for military purposes [https://www.doi.gov/ocl/hearings/113/hr4253\\_032514#](https://www.doi.gov/ocl/hearings/113/hr4253_032514#)

<sup>10</sup> For example, the White Tanks Conservation Area, which some local Native American tribes have verbally indicated is a sacred place and contains abundant archaeological remains, is likely to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register, but YPG has not submitted formal nomination documents, per the 2017-2021 ICRMP. While the land is identified as a conservation area, further preservation could serve to mitigate land relationship impacts.

<sup>11</sup> CEQ’s definition of mitigation in 40 CFR 1508.1(s) includes: 1) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action, 2) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, 3) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment, 4) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action, 5) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

<sup>12</sup> This document is available at: [https://www.nathpo.org/assets/pdf/NATHPO\\_Best\\_Practices/](https://www.nathpo.org/assets/pdf/NATHPO_Best_Practices/)



We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this scoping notice. When the DLEIS is released for public review, please email an electronic notification to [vitulano.karen@epa.gov](mailto:vitulano.karen@epa.gov) and please refrain from sending hard copy notices as we are transitioning to a fully electronic environment. If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-947-4178 or by email.

Sincerely,

KAREN  
VITULANO

Digitally signed by KAREN  
VITULANO  
Date: 2022.12.01 15:08:44 -08'00'

Karen Vitulano  
Environmental Review Branch

cc: Mike Ouellett, Bureau of Land Management  
Chris Lohrengel, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge Manager



12/7/2022

Mr. Daniel Steward,  
Environmental Sciences Division,  
U.S. Army Garrison—Yuma Proving Ground,  
301 C St., Bldg. 307, Yuma, AZ 85365

Submitted by email to [usarmy.vpg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.vpg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil).

Dear Mr. Steward:

The Center for Biological Diversity respectfully submits the following comments on the Department of the Army's (Army) intention to prepare a legislative environmental impact statement (LEIS) regarding the withdrawal and reservation for military purposes of approximately 22,000 acres of public land now managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to add to the existing withdrawal and reservation for the Army's Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), Arizona.

The Army proposes actions that could drastically alter the environmental status quo by eliminating vital protections for lands and wildlife in the 22,000 acres of the BLM land, enabling the destruction of vital habitat for imperiled species. The BLM land in question overlaps with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ranges for Yellow-billed cuckoo and Sonoran pronghorn.

We recommend that public lands not be withdrawn for military use.

Should the land be withdrawn and reserved for military purpose we hope that the Army will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning potentially affected threatened and endangered species, consult with potentially affected Tribes, conduct adequate environmental studies that includes public participation and involvement, maintain and increase current protection for lands and wildlife within the 22,000 acres, create and maintain wildlife crossings where appropriate, and close these lands to all cattle grazing, mining and ORV traffic.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection of native species and their habitats in the Western Hemisphere through science, policy, and environmental law. The Center has over 1.6 million members and supporters throughout Arizona and the United States.

Sincerely,

Russ McSpadden  
Southwest Conservation Advocate  
Center for Biological Diversity



**DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL**

3807 Sierra Highway #6-4514

Acton, CA 93510

[www.deserttortoise.org](http://www.deserttortoise.org)

[eac@deserttortoise.org](mailto:eac@deserttortoise.org)

**Via email**

December 8, 2022

Daniel Steward  
Environmental Sciences Division  
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301 C St., Bldg. 307  
Yuma, AZ 85365  
[usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.ypg.imcom.mbx.nepa@army.mil)

RE: Scoping Comments on Notice of Intent to a Prepare Legislative Environmental Impact Statement Regarding Proposed Public Land Withdrawal in Vicinity of Arizona State Route 95, Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona

Dear Mr. Steward,

The Desert Tortoise Council (Council) is a non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of professionals and laypersons who share a common concern for wild desert tortoises and a commitment to advancing the public's understanding of desert tortoise species. Established in 1975 to promote conservation of tortoises in the deserts of the southwestern United States and Mexico, the Council routinely provides information and other forms of assistance to individuals, organizations, and regulatory agencies on matters potentially affecting desert tortoises within their geographic ranges.

As of June 2022, our mailing address has changed to:  
Desert Tortoise Council  
3807 Sierra Highway #6-4514  
Acton, CA 93510

Our email address has not changed. Both addresses are provided above in our letterhead for your use when providing future correspondence to us. When given a choice, we prefer that the Department of the Army (Army) email to us future correspondence, as mail delivered via the U.S. Postal Service may take several days to be delivered. Email is an "environmentally friendlier way" of receiving correspondence and documents rather than "snail mail."

Desert Tortoise Council/Comments/Yuma Proving Ground LEIS Scoping Comments.12-8-2022

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We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments on the above-referenced proposed action. Given the location of the proposed action in habitats known to be occupied by the Sonoran desert tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*) (synonymous with Morafka's desert tortoise), our comments pertain to enhancing protection of this species during activities funded, proposed, authorized, or carried out by the Army, which we assume will be added to the Decision Record for this proposed action as needed. Please accept, carefully review, and include in the relevant file for this proposed action the Council's following comments.

### **Proposed Action**

In its Notice of Intent (NOI), the Army is proposing to withdraw for military use about 22,000 acres of public land currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The purpose of the proposed land withdrawal is to provide additional area for testing and training at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) including testing of advanced air delivery technologies and aviation systems, parachute systems, and payload drops using GPS-guided delivery from aircraft to the ground. The additional land will allow the Army to execute more complex air delivery and tactical scenarios. The withdrawn land may also be used for other training and testing activities that are unknown at this time. This withdrawal and use would add to the existing withdrawal and reservation for the Army's YPG in Yuma and La Paz counties, Arizona. The requested withdrawal area extends east to State Route 95.

YPG's mission is to plan, conduct, assess, analyze, report, and support developmental, production, and operational tests on medium- and long-range artillery; aircraft target acquisition equipment and armament; armored tracked and wheeled vehicles; a variety of munitions; and parachute systems for personnel and supplies. YPG also provides training support to the Army, Department of Defense (DoD), other federal agencies, and international and commercial customers. Currently, in a typical year, YPG conducts, more than 500,000 artillery, mortar, and missile firings; 36,000 parachute drops; vehicles driving 200,000 miles during training, and more than 4,000 flights of air sorties. In a typical year, dozens of military units use the facility for realistic desert training, especially before deploying overseas.

### **Connected Actions Argument**

In the NOI, the Army says it will analyze potential environmental impacts resulting from the withdrawal of land from BLM oversight **and** (emphasis added) from expanding military capability within the withdrawn area. Under 40 CFR 1506.8(b) "preparation of a legislative environmental impact statement shall conform to the requirements of these regulations" with "these" meaning the regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Later in the NOI, the Army says "[t]he LEIS [Legislative Environmental Impact Statement] is the detailed environmental statement required by law that will support the [Army's] legislative proposal of the withdrawal of the 22,000 acres of land. The Army will cover possible impacts to biological and cultural resources in a **separate** (emphasis added) NEPA analysis before training and testing by the Army begin." From the last two sentences, we conclude the Army will analyze the impacts of the administrative withdrawal, and later in another NEPA document, it will analyze the impacts of the proposed uses the Army will conduct on the withdrawn lands. Herein, we ask that any additional documents be provided to us via email to allow additional opportunities for input.

Under NEPA's implementing regulations, connected actions are closely related and therefore should be discussed in the same impact statement. Actions are connected if they:

- (1) Automatically trigger other actions that may require environmental impact statements.
- (2) Cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously.
- (3) And/or, are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification (40 CFR 1508.25).

We believe the legislative proposal for the land withdrawal is connected to the uses of the withdrawn lands the Army describes in the NOI. These are listed above under Proposed Action. We conclude this because it is the Army that is requesting the land withdrawal from Congress and the Army identified reasons for the request in the NOI. Because the land withdrawal is connected to the Army's need for testing and training that they identified in the NOI, we believe the land withdrawal and the use of the withdrawn lands by the Army are connected actions. *But for* the land withdrawal, there would be no change in land use. Consequently, we request that the Army prepare a single LEIS on the land withdrawal and land use that describes and analyzes the impacts to the human environment including the Sonoran desert tortoise and its habitat, not two as the Army mentions in its NOI. We provide additional reasons below under "Transparency" and "Need for Congress as a Decisionmaker to Be Fully Informed."

### **Transparency**

The current administration has promised to be the most ethical and transparent in history. The Council believes the Army is not being transparent about the land withdrawal by separating the analysis of the land withdrawal (needed for expanded testing training, and public safety) from the proposed uses of the withdrawn lands. We request the Army include in one NEPA document the land withdrawal and a description and analysis of the impacts to the human environment, including the Sonoran desert tortoise, and identify effective mitigation to fully offset these impacts.

### **Need for Congress as a Decisionmaker to Be Fully Informed**

For the proposed action, Congress is the decisionmaker for the land withdrawal and the Army is the decisionmaker for the uses of, impacts to, and mitigation for the withdrawn lands. The purpose of the LEIS is to describe and analyze the impacts of the land withdrawal to the human environment, which includes the Sonoran desert tortoise and its habitat, and to identify mitigation for the impacts. The LEIS should include a description and analysis of the impacts of existing uses/activities at YPG and proposed uses/activities on withdrawn lands that the Army describes in the NOI, which is why the Army claims there is a need for the land withdrawal. This "package" of information and analysis is needed because these are the activities that would occur on the withdrawn lands, and Congress needs to know what the full effect of their decision will be on the human environment including the Sonoran desert tortoise and its habitat.

We request that the Army produce one LEIS for Congress and the public that includes an analysis of the impacts of the land withdrawal, the impacts that will occur on the withdrawn lands, and mitigation that will be implemented, especially for the Sonoran desert tortoise.

## Alternatives

The alternatives mentioned in the NOI include:

- Proposed Action Alternative – withdrawal of 22,000 acres for military testing and training
- No Action Alternative - no additional land would be withdrawn and YPG would not expand its capability
- Other Alternatives - these could include the withdrawal and reservation of land for a shorter duration (i.e., 25 years).

We recommend the Army analyze one or more alternatives that includes the following:

- Exclusion of the withdrawn land from compliance with the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act;
- Management responsibility of biological resources given to the Army;
- Effective implementation of the Sikes Act Improvement Act at YPG to “provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources on military installations;”
- An updated, fully funded, and implemented YPG Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) especially with respect to management/restoration of the tortoise population and habitat, monitoring, and adaptive management to enhance the Sonoran desert tortoise population/habitat at YPG;
- Establishment of a refuge overlay on the withdrawn lands for future U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) management; and.
- With effective implementation of these activities, consideration of the Army’s withdrawal for longer than 25 years.

**Exclusion from Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act:** Feral burros occur in and near the YPG. They compete with tortoises for limited forage and trample the ground causing damage to soil crusts, soil compaction, and increased erosion (Abella 2008). These conditions further limit seed germination and growth of native plant species in an environment that already limits native plant germination/growth from high temperatures, low humidity, and low availability of water/precipitation. Berry et al. (2020) identified a negative association between tortoises and feral burros (i.e., as burro sign increased, tortoise presence decreased) and Tuma et al. (2016) reported grazing livestock and feral burro disturbances caused the most severe tortoise population declines. Feral burros negatively impact other wildlife species and their habitats. In addition, feral burro management diverts resources—both human and financial—from the management of native species, undermines the principles of wildlife biology/conservation, and harms the public credibility of wildlife biologists (Becar 2017).

If the Army’s intent is to successfully conduct its military mission while managing YPG for native species and habitats (e.g., Sikes Act Improvement Act), especially given the increasing impacts of climate change and growing species extinction rate, the Army should not be encumbered with managing feral burros at YPG. Abella (2010) notes that efforts to restore/maintain old growth perennial plant communities in southwest deserts should include removal of feral burros. Congress has the authority to exclude YPG from the Wild Free-roaming Horses and Burros Act. We recommend this exclusion be included in the land withdrawal legislation and analyzed in the LEIS.

**Management Responsibility for Biological Resources:** The Army is proposing a land withdrawal, not an acquisition, for an unspecified duration. We are unsure whether BLM may retain some or all responsibility for managing the biological resources, including the Sonoran desert tortoises that occur on the 22,000 acres. If BLM does, we believe this arrangement unduly complicates management and coordination of wildlife resources. Management of biological resources should be science-based and streamlined, as quick and efficient implementation of management actions to conserve species and habitats will likely be needed to reduce increasing extinction rates and better manage for species diversity as climate change impacts increase.

The Council recommends that the Army be the land manager for the biological resources using the 22,000-acre proposed expansion area at YPG with two conditions – (1) the Army should implement the Sikes Act Improvement Act effectively, and (2) a refuge overlay should be placed on the withdrawn lands for future refuge designation.

**Effective Implementation of Sikes Act Improvement Act/Revised INRMP:** The purpose of the Sikes Act Improvement Act is to “provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources on military installations.” To facilitate this, the Sikes Act Improvement Act requires the DoD (which includes the Army) to develop and implement INRMPs for military installations. INRMPs are to reflect the mutual agreement of the parties concerning conservation, protection, and management of fish and wildlife resources.

The intent of the Act appears to have been diminished in YPG’s recent INRMP (Army 2022), which includes language for conservation management actions such as “when feasible” that allows the Army to avoid or de-prioritize implementation of conservation actions, especially for management and monitoring of the tortoise/tortoise habitat. This INRMP should be revised to include management and monitoring actions to ensure the Army is effectively contributing to the conservation of the Sonoran desert tortoise at YPG. Given the climate change and extinction crises worsen yearly, we recommend the LEIS include a requirement that the Army at YPG fully implement its future INRMPs, and that wording that enables the Army to forego conservation management be eliminated.

**Establishment of a Refuge Overlay:** When the military withdrawal is no longer needed, the withdrawn lands would revert to the USFWS as part of Kofa National Wildlife Refuge following DoD’s removal of any environmental contaminants on the withdrawn lands.

These bulleted management actions would help to offset the impacts of the proposed land withdrawal and associated military uses for testing and training purposes. If the Army does not include them as part of the description of alternatives, they could be included in the mitigation section of the LEIS.

### **Direct and Indirect Impacts**

**Fencing associated with the Land Withdrawal:** From the NOI we presume the Army intends to fence the new YPG boundary to prevent public access to the 22,000 acres. Installation of fencing may result in injury or mortality to tortoises, and new surface disturbance in tortoise habitat will promote the establishment, growth, and spread of non-native invasive annual plant species that

provide a carpet of fuel to spread fires. Depending on the type of fence, it may create a barrier to tortoise movement between populations resulting in a substantial reduction or halt of gene flow between populations, effectively isolating tortoises within YPG. This isolation can result in population declines from genetic (e.g., inbreeding depression), demographic (e.g., small population size), and environmental (e.g., fire, climate change, etc.) stochasticity (Gilpin and Soulé 1986). These impacts should be analyzed in the LEIS.

Fencing will also prevent people from hiking on the withdrawn lands; exploring them to enjoy the solitude, colors, sounds, and fragrances of nature; and wildlife viewing including observing tortoises in an undisturbed setting. The loss of these opportunities should be analyzed in the LEIS.

*Testing and Training Activities:* Direct and indirect impacts of Army testing and training on the withdrawn lands include direct injury and mortality of tortoises, indirect mortality from subsidized predators and human activities, indirect harm and mortality of tortoises from degradation, fragmentation, and loss of habitat (e.g., non-native invasive plants and fire, etc.), and alteration of behavior from noise. These impacts should be analyzed in the LEIS along with the impacts of environmental contaminants that are used by the Army at YPG that remain after use of testing and training activities in the withdrawn lands, or may migrate there from current uses on adjacent YPG land. These impacts should be described and analyzed in the LEIS.

This proposed action appears to be a continuation of the military's recent practice of expanding the areas of existing military reservations in the southwest deserts (e.g., Fort Irwin, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, etc.). Such changes in management of large areas of tortoise habitat with little or no analysis of the direct, indirect, cumulative, interactive, and synergistic effects to the native flora and fauna of these areas, including special status species such as the tortoise is unacceptable. While an administrative change in land management responsibility would have some impacts to the Sonoran desert tortoise and its habitat, the implementation of on-the-ground activities the Army is proposing on the withdrawn lands (e.g., surface disturbance, noise, etc. from tactical scenarios that use artillery, armored tracked and wheeled vehicles, a variety of munitions, and parachute systems for personnel and supplies), which is the purpose for the withdrawal, would result in impacts to the Sonoran desert tortoise and its habitat, including habitat used for connectivity to tortoise populations located in a patchy distribution in other parts of western and southern Arizona. Please include and analyze these impacts in the LEIS.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The Council requests that the Army conduct an analysis of all direct, indirect, interactive, synergistic, and cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of the land withdrawal and resulting land uses in the withdrawal area. This analysis of cumulative, interactive, and synergistic impacts should be conducted according to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) "Considering Cumulative Effects under the National Environmental Policy Act" (CEQ 1997). Note that CEQ specifically names an analysis of interactive and synergistic effects under #6 with its analysis of cumulative effects.



For the alternatives in the LEIS, we request that BLM include all eight principles in its analysis of cumulative impacts to the Mojave desert tortoise, especially an analysis of interactive, cumulative, and synergistic impacts to the tortoise and tortoise habitats (#6), an analysis of the cumulative effects to the tortoise/tortoise habitat beyond the life of the project alternatives by applying the best science and forecasting techniques to assess potential catastrophic consequences in the future (#7), and an analysis of the capacity of the tortoise and its habitat to accommodate additional impacts from each alternative based on the tortoise's life history strategy and time needed for restoration of desert soils and vegetation needed by the tortoise for nutrition, shelter, and population connectivity (#8).

### **Mitigation**

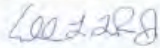
In the NOI the Army says, "The LEIS will also identify mitigation measures that would **reduce** [emphasis added] or eliminate any adverse impacts resulting from the transfer of this land to the Army's administrative control." Why isn't the Army obligated to fully offset and fully mitigate the adverse impacts of the land withdrawal and Army's proposed land use? Will the proposed mitigation be fully and effectively implemented? Unfortunately, the Council's experience with other federal agencies is they identify mitigation to help offset the impacts of a proposed action in a NEPA document, but the mitigation is often not implemented.

To mitigate for the impacts described earlier and to assure that the Army's actions do not contribute to the listing of the Sonoran desert tortoise in the future, we strongly recommend the Army implement the following actions along with monitoring their effectiveness and promptly implementing adaptive management when implemented management actions are not fully effective.

1. The Army should update the INRMP (Army 2022) prior to implementing any change to the current management of the withdrawn lands. These updates should include funded management actions to conserve the Sonoran desert tortoise as well as other special status species. Updating the INRMP should be a public and transparent process under NEPA. The INRMP should include specific management actions with measurable/quantifiable objectives. It should be science-based and statistically rigorous. Hence, monitoring for effectiveness of the management actions should be required.
2. The Commander at YPG should be a signatory to the Candidate Conservation Agreement for the Sonoran desert tortoise, after the Agreement is revised to reflect the recent devastating loss/degradation of tortoise habitat and tortoises from wildfires and climate change.
3. If the Army has no plans to relinquish the proposed withdrawal of the 22,000 acres in the foreseeable future, it should modify its withdrawal request to add lands to Kofa National Wildlife Refuge that include a preponderance of tortoise habitat, and place a conservation easement or similar designation/protection on these mitigation lands.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments on this project and trust they will protect and conserve tortoises during any resulting authorized activities. Herein, we reiterate that the Desert Tortoise Council wants to be identified as an Affected Interest for this and all other projects funded, authorized, or carried out by the Army that may affect species of desert tortoises, and that any subsequent environmental documentation for this project is provided to us at the contact information listed above. Additionally, we ask that you respond in an email that you have received this comment letter so we can be sure our concerns have been registered with the appropriate personnel and office for this project.

Respectfully,



Edward L. LaRue, Jr., M.S.  
Ecosystems Advisory Committee, Chairperson  
Desert Tortoise Council

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## **Appendix D2. BLM Withdrawal Application Comments**

**From:** [Glen Vandervoort](#)  
**To:** [Withdrawal Comments, BLM AZ](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] YPG Withdrawal of public lands  
**Date:** Saturday, April 9, 2022 9:30:45 AM

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The base is large enough already and so restricts the residents and visitors of the area from accessing beautiful spaces along the river, roads, and mountains already.

We are so hemmed in by federal land that is mostly non useable to the public – make one feel as if they are in a foreign country and need to cross miles of border to get access to public lands. Looking at this map shows that a person would have to travel almost 60 miles north of Yuma to access land west of the highway. NO, NO, NO

Keep the land open for many uses – the old slogan “land of many uses” was wonderful and allowed so much public / private activity, now it seems the government is hell bent on restricting all access to our own country.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Vandervoort  
PO Box 4938  
Yuma, AZ 85366

928-314-0457



June 28, 2022

Bureau of Land Management, Arizona  
Attn: Michael Ouellett  
One North Central Avenue  
Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

**Re: Proposed Expansion of the Yuma Proving Ground**

**Submitted electronically:** [BLM AZ Withdrawal Comments@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AZ-Withdrawal_Comments@blm.gov)

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on proposed expansion of the US Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) located north of Yuma, Arizona.

AZSFWC is a 501c-3 organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, youth recruitment and retention, as well as educating outdoor enthusiasts on issues important to their passions. AZSFWC member organizations reach across the spectrum of wildlife conservation, hunting, angling, shooting sports, youth orientated groups, outdoor recreation groups and businesses from across Arizona, representing more than 20,000 people.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has received an application from the US Army to expand the existing footprint of the YPG facility in southwestern Arizona. The additional area would provide a safety buffer for aerial drop testing/training and would be established by withdrawal of 22,000 acres of BLM lands located immediately west of Highway 95. The proposed withdrawal area is within Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD) Game Management Units 43A and 43B. This is an important access point for individuals hunting desert bighorn sheep in the Chocolate Mountains and also provides opportunities for pursuing mule deer and small game.

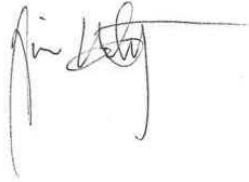
AZSFWC realizes the importance of YPG to the Army mission and appreciates ongoing efforts to maintain hunting opportunities on the installation, as well as close coordination with AZGFD. We support the proposed withdrawal, with the understanding that the area would remain open for use by hunters and managed similarly to other hunting areas on YPG that support testing and training activities.

We would also suggest this process might present an opportunity to facilitate easier hunting access to the proximate YPG hunt area located on the east side of Highway 95. This area provides similar hunting opportunities as the area considered for withdrawal as

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well as access to adjoining public lands managed by the BLM and Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. Our understanding is that there are few, if any conflicts with public use and YPG mission on that narrow strip of land. We encourage the BLM and YPG to explore options such as a land exchange or relaxation of the existing requirement for hunters to obtain range clearances before entering that particular area.

AZSFWC and 26 of our Member organizations (list attached) appreciate your consideration of these comments!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Unmacht", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Unmacht  
Executive Director

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PO Box 75731 New River, AZ 85087



**AZSFWC Member Organizations Supporting Comments  
on Expansion of the US Army Yuma Proving Ground**

Anglers United  
AZ Antelope Foundation  
AZ Bass Nation  
AZ Big Game Super Raffle  
AZ Council of Trout Unlimited  
AZ Deer Association  
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society  
AZ Elk Society  
AZ Flycasters Club  
AZ Houndsmen's Association  
AZ Outdoor Sports  
AZ Predator Callers  
AZ State Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation  
Christian Hunters of America  
Diablo Trust  
Mule Deer Foundation  
No Excuse Hunting & Outdoors  
Outdoor Experience 4 All  
Southern AZ Quail Forever  
Southwest Wildlife Foundation  
SRT Outdoors  
The Bass Federation of AZ  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Trust for Public Land  
Valley of the Sun Quail Forever  
Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club

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